the Messiah and having sinned against great light, they become blinded captives of the enemy, Satan, and thus active enemies of all Christians. Their blasphemy was in the claim of being the Almighty's chosen, although not in truth or righteousness. Yet they have been preserved as a people for a purpose soon to be fulfilled at the close of the Age. :10- So great was the persecution that untold thousands of saints suffered imprisonment, many unto death by torture from men and by savage animals. The 10 days are symbolic of the 10 great persecutions that rose and receded during a period of over two centuries, and in the end-time are symbolic of a short period of time. '10' is the number of worldly power and also portrays the completion of the soul cycle during which the life, which had been received into the souls of those persecuted, was tested and proven through the 'fires' of opposition, engendering completion into 'life crowned'. These have possessed eternal life for the soul, and now attain to that for the body also. The crown of life promised to those who are faithful into death is life on a higher plane of attainment. The crown indicates rule, instead of being ruled over. Life crowned must therefore be life immortal, having overcome the rule of death. Here it is not life in a glorified body such as that of Jesus Christ, but an undying body on earth for functioning in the earthly Kingdom for up to thousands of years and until glorified. It goes beyond the gift of eternal soul life. For such overcomers, it is a resurrection into immortality which is the ultimate on earth, short of glorification, for those who love the Lord and keep His commandments. :11- A promise of assurance is given in this letter to those who overcome, even in a measure. There are degrees of overcoming pictured by there being 7 special promises to the overcomers in the 7 letters. The assurance here is for those who go beyond the initial believing in Christ's vicarious atonement for their sins. The escaping of the 2nd death is possible only by being 'born anew' by the incorruptible seed (John 3:3-5, Jas.1:21, IPet.1:23). When Christ's very own Life is imparted to the soul, it is forever free from death and the eventual restoration of the physical body is also assured, if that body has been laid aside in death. The 2nd death has to do with a future judgment day, but those who have passed from death to life (John 5:24) remain secure and they shall have no part in the activated 'lake of fire' which brings the 2nd death for both body and soul (Matt.10:28,Rev.20:9-15).

In IThess.5:23, we read that man is spirit, soul and body. The spirit is the very substance of God; God is a Spirit (John 4:24), He is the Father of Spirits (Heb.12:9, Num.16:22), and He forms the spirit of man within him (Zech. 12:1). God made the physical body of dust of the ground, breathed into man the breath (spirit) of lives, and man became a living soul (Gen.2:7). God is not an earth creature, breathing air, and so we must understand that God here exuded out of Himself a portion of what He is (Spirit). In the Hebrew, the same word is used for breath,

man to fulfill their calling and the Lord holds us accountable not to be deceived by men who would exalt and promote the flesh of men as a substitute for true spiritual authority and power. What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of the Lord (Lk.16:15). :7 - But there were those who rose above the waywardness and were sensitive to the wooing and leading of the Holy Spirit, they had ears to hear. He who overcomes may eat of or from the Tree of Life in the paradise of God. These are overcomers in measure because of fidelity and obedience to the Word, overcoming a laxness toward seeking Jesus Christ and His will first. The tree is Christ's own life and righteousness imparted to those who receive Him in faith (Prov.3:15-18, ICor.1:30). The fruit speaks of joys and blessedness to those who have so yielded in love and obedience that the fruits of righteousness, the fruits of the Spirit's working in their inner being, are brought forth in profusion. The Tree of Life is within the faithful Christian just as the Tree of Life bearing its fruit is in the midst of the paradise of God. The paradise is the 'garden' of the human body in which divine life is at work, watered by the Word and the Spirit, and quickened by the warmth of reciprocated love (ICor.3:9, Lk.8:5-8). :8 - The letter to Smyrna (means suffering), following the letter to Ephesus symbolizes the next historical period after the Apostolic, that of the great persecutions under the Roman emperors. Many saints were martyred in those days and, for that reason, the salutation has to do with life for evermore. It is the assurance that as Jesus was the first in the New Covenant to die by the hands of persecutors, so He would be with all who had to lay down their lives for His Name's sake, even to the last one. And even as He was made alive after death, so He would quicken to life all who laid down their lives in death, - first in the realms of the soul and then finally in the resurrection of the physical body. All those of the Church also shall attain by presenting themselves as a living sacrifice (Ro.12:1-2). Sacrifice means giving up many things and many values, and on the Altar they are consumed. We die to all things in order to be made alive like Him. We give up perhaps some good things in order to have the good and the hurtful replaced with the best. The living sacrifice is God's way of making martyrs in the cause of Christ for a full overcomer's life, but many will not submit wholly and so may become man-made martyrs. :9 - During the intense persecutions, by the Roman beast, many Christians found themselves in great poverty because it was common practice to confiscate all belongings of those who would not deny their faith; however, they were rich in faith and spiritual truths. The persecutions were carried out by the Roman powers, but, in many instances, the persecutions were instigated behind the scene by Jews scattered throughout the empire, who, although claiming to be physical descendents of Abraham, were not 'true Jews' or Israelites indeed according to the Spirit of faith (Ro.2:28-29). Having rejected

or wind, or spirit. God first formed or fathered the spirit which was to be placed in the physical body of Adam and that spirit was then placed in the physical body. When there it became the spirit of lives (plural in the original Hebrew) and there was generated in man's physical body a soul. The spirit placed within animated a two-fold life or a two-fold body, the outer physical body and the inner 'soul body': when the spirit, fathered by God, is placed within the unborn fetus, it's powers take of the living substance within the developing organism and form a vehicle called the soul. The soul becomes a means of expression through the physical, the personality, the mental-emotional-volitional nature. Since the soul is sustained by the life-forces of the physical, it is subject to death as is the physical body (Ezek.18:4, 20) so both soul and body need to be saved or preserved. The soul is of a highly tenuous substance which cannot be seen by physical eyes, but it is just as much a vehicle or 'body' for the spirit as is the physical body and can function on celestial planes of being after separation from the physical body. This is why the soul needs to be saved or preserved from death.

At the death of our physical body, the human spirit is released to the unseen realm (the meaning of Hades) within and around our earth, the realm ruled by Satan (Eph.2:2, John 12:31), still sheathed in the soul garment. Those who are saved are immediately transported beyond this realm of Hades to the realm called Paradise, symbolically described as Abraham's bosom in Luke 16:22, where they continue to live and enjoy God's blessings, fully clothed in their preserved soul garments. No man yet has gone to heaven except Jesus (John 3:13). Rev.6:9 shows that the souls (spirits fully clothed in soul garments) of those who died are under the altar waiting completed redemption and resurrection (Ro.8:23) at the time of fulfillment of God's plan (the symbolic earthly altar was always outside the Holy of Holies (Ex. 30:6, 10), God's presence, except on the day of Atonement (Lev.16: 12, 30, 34, Heb.9:4) (see footnote in Amplified Bible) the prophetic day of Atonement is at the end of the Age. Those who are not saved remain in Satan's realm of Hades and are in torments (Lk.16:23), torment of mind in grief over their folly and also torment of the 'flame' which they experience as their soul bodies gradually disintegrate, the life forces slowly abating.

With its garments or bodies lost, the spirit becomes naked and has no function. Even the thought of not having a physical body garment for the spirit was an abhorent one to the apostle Paul (2Cor.5:3-4). We read in Scripture of spirits in prison or confinement (IPet.3:19) and these are spirits which had lost both body and soul. Other Scriptures speaks of saved ones as 'souls' (Rev.6:9). When a 'soul' is not saved or preserved from death, it also dies or disintegrates after the death of the physical body, leaving the spirit naked. After the soul 'body' is fully disintegrated in Hades, the naked spirit is released from

that place to ascend to God (Ecc.12:7) and to then be confined to await resurrection. Scripture does not say just where the released spirits go or what they do but in some way the naked spirits are confined by God, until the day they are to come back to earth and be re-clothed in resurrection bodies, with soul bodies again reformed within the physical. This return is for all who have seen physical death, both saved and unsaved, but saved and unsaved have different destinies (John 5:28-29, Acts.24:15, ICor. 15:21). Therefore, humbly receive the implanted Word which is able to preserve <u>your souls</u> (James 1:21). What does a man profit if he gain the whole world and lose <u>his own soul</u> (Matt.16:26).

In the final 'lake of fire', Gehenna, Jesus warns that both physical body and soul will be destroyed, but nothing is said of the spirit being destroyed, for it is of the very substance of God (Matt.10:28). A spirit needs garments or vehicles for its growth in understanding and for continuing progress in the plan and purpose of God, both during life on earth and during life through eternity; therefore, death of either body or soul is a tragic loss for the spirit. It is important for the soul to have been saved or preserved from death, but it is vital to attain the redemption and deliverance of the physical body from death also. Gehenna means Valley of Hinnon, a valley outside Jerusalem where refuse was burned and dead bodies of criminals were sometimes thrown, where a fire was continually burning and Gehenna becomes symbolic of the final 'lake of fire'. This is what Jesus referred to in Matt.10:28, 25:41, etc. and in Rev.20:9-15 it is also called the 2nd death from which all saved ones escape (Rev.2:11, 20:6) and beyond which there is no hope of a resurrection (2Thess.1:8-10).

A short time before Rev.20:9 takes place, all the unsaved will be resurrected with physical and soul bodies to play a negative part in the concluding drama of that day. When the judgment of God falls and the earth receives its baptism of fire all physical bodies of the unsaved are instantly destroyed (the saved then living on earth will be translated at that moment to receive glorified bodies which cannot be hurt by the fire). Then immediately the 'lake of fire' is activated for receiving the unseen realm of Satan, Hades, in which all those who have had physical bodies destroyed will find themselves. They will then experience a 2nd death for their soul bodies, fulfilling Jesus' words that both body and soul would be destroyed in Gehenna. Although physical bodies are destroyed instantly, the soul bodies disintegrate over a long period of time, symbolically pictured in the Bible by the disease of leprosy. Eventually 'naked' spirits, which have lost soul and body, have no bodies or vehicles in which to function, and find no rest or purpose. Scripture does not tell what they then do, but their conscious existance continues forever, even though they have 'lost all'!

:12-13- <u>The 3rd Church</u>,

Pergamos (means the heights) represents the period of Church history following the lifting up of Christianity as the state religion (the church married to the State) of the Roman Empire early in the 4th century. It represents a period of great spiritual decline and the ascendancy of man-controlled apostacy in a gradual process. Many still held fast to the faith and did not deny Jesus Christ, but others became so engrossed in counterfeit forms of church life that the very seat of Satan became entrenched within the growing church structure. It was a period of increasing contrasts and conflict. Earlier Pergamos had become the center of Satan's Babylon-type, emperor worship after Babylon fell. Later, the practices and authority of those 'spiritual' rulers were officially transferred to the Roman Emporer by legal and political means about 133 BC (pg.240 "The Two Babylons"), and were made the province of the Bishop of Rome (the Pope) about 378 AD.

We are to be judged by the Word of God and He wields that sharp two-edged sword which will separate those who wholly believe. The Word is a measuring line (Rev. 11:1-2, Isa.28:16-17) and all must come into God's measurements before leaving the altar (Rev.6:9). When the Word of God has gone forth, all who hear must follow the judgments of God as to how they are walking in the light of that Word. Antipas (meaning against all) represents those who remain faithful against all and resist the encroaching apostacy, but the fact that he was slain speaks of the power of entrenched authority to 'kill out' the resistance of those who continue to stand for pure and unadulterated Christianity. The rapidity with which Satan established his seat within the organized church structure was a direct result of the church-state marriage, because the union constituted spiritual adultery and unfaithfulness to Jesus Christ. Therefore, He withdrew His favor (blessings) rapidly.

:14- Jesus likens the development to the doctrines of Balaam, who was a true prophet subsequently corrupted by desire for material gain and who sought to unite the 'world' with the called-out ones (Num.22-25, 31:16, 2Pet.2:15), for he promoted compromise with heathen religious 'practices' (with the Moabite women who brought in these practices), in order to secure what he wanted. Balaam becomes the type of ambitious leaders who increasingly cause the people to 'sacrifice to idols' by introducing many pagan (unscriptural) beliefs and practices and by leading people into further 'adultery' with the state. They cause the 'arm of flesh' to rise in strength and dominate the affairs of the Church, bringing a reliance on the world system (Jas.4:4) and on wealth (Matt.6:24). About 300 AD, the clergy began to receive salaries out of the State treasury. :15- Not only did the doctrine of Balaam become firmly entrenched during this period, but the doctrine of the Nicolaitans also grew rapidly. Thus the works of the Nicolaitans among a few (Rev.2:6) became in this period an established doctrine, and in-

creasingly the ministries take on sacerdotal importance, becoming fashioned after the priesthood of the pagan religions. More and more power was put into the hands of fewer, as a hierarchy of authority began to grow. (God says each is to advance in His way, by His love and by serving all - Matt.20:25-28). The ground work was being laid for complete carnal usurpation of Christ's spiritual authority and for a counterfeit form of Christianity, the nadir of which is reached in the next period.

:16- Because of the trend to apostacy, Jesus Christ's words are spoken as a sharp sword of judgment and of punishment, and He will fight against them with the sword of His mouth, unless they repent. The sword is a symbol of division or separation (Lk.12:51-53). This He does by raising up many faithful servants to denounce the false teachings and practices of the power-hungry clergy who increasingly make merchandise of the people to further their own ends. When the era of this church came to a close, a darkness which almost totally eclipsed the light of Truth had engulfed the Christian world. For several hundred years, there would be only slight glimmers of light among small groups of faithful followers, here and there (500-1500 AD). Truly the night had come when no man could work effectively (John 9:4-5).

:17- But for those who would hear, He promises hidden manna and a white stone with a new name on it. The Ark of Testimony was a type of Jesus Christ in His incarnation and glorification, and the manna which sustained the Israelites in the wilderness was placed and hidden within the ark. Jesus proclaims He is ready to reveal hidden mysteries to those who are ready to receive (Matt.13:11, John 6:35), since all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him (Col.2:3). Overcomers are always privileged to that which is not available to many, for they draw on His grace to rise above carnal tendencies which continually draw most people in to avoid various compromise positions in the Christian living. By the Spirit of revelation He gives the precious truths of the living Word on a new level to those who are hungry to eat and He brings in a courtship to win His Bride to stand beside Him. The white stone is a token of a course finished and a race won. In ancient times, it was the prize (different than a gift) for the victorious. The new name (character and influence) written on the stone has a meaning of 'one in whom the Lord delights' and is symbolic of the new realm of glory which will be inherited by those who attain to the prize of the high calling (Phil.3:14). The stone's whiteness indicates that purity of life which marks those who will enter the realm where they will see God and be in constant fellowship with Him (Matt.5:8). Elsewhere this purity is symbolized as being clothed in white (Rev.3:4-5, 7:9, 19:14).

:18- During the period of <u>the 4th Church, Thyatira</u>,(meaning continual or many sacrifices - in this case, to the mother of harlots), the apostacy cul-

minates with complete centralization of power. Jesus Christ sees and searches out all things with His penetrating insight like a flame of fire. Like burnished and white-hot bronze His is a refined and Godly wisdom, perfect in righteousness and judgment. This attribute is associated especially with His feet which in many places also picture the last generation of this Age in the Body of Christ. What the 'eyes' see, the 'feet' will judge (ICor. 6:2-3).

:19-20 - In this church system, there is spiritual reality, and there are many in it who know the Lord, but man's church system always develops to a firm, self-reliant status thoroughly run by man for gain of power over individuals and for wealth. Therefore, the Lord has expressed His displeasure over the increased apostacy. During this era, the apostacy culminated into a complete centralization of power in the bishop of Rome who was given the title of 'Pope' a papa of bishops. The eastern section of the organized church resisted this centralization of power in the west and gradually a schism developed to such proportions that an open split resulted.

After commending the faithful of the church of Thyatira for their works and love and service and faith and patient endurance, the Lord spoke of things against them which led into apostacy. That which was the doctrine of Balaam during the Pergamos period became the seducing tactics of that woman Jezebel in the Thyatira era of the church. Jezebel was the wife of the wicked King Ahab during the days when Israel had almost completely abandoned the faith of their fathers. She was the daughter of a foreign king who brought her alien religion into Israel to displace God. Because of the weakness of Ahab, she dominated the religious life of the nation, destroying the true prophets of God and establishing the prophets of Baal and Asherah (IKings 16:30-33, 18:13, 19). This is the typical picture Jesus chose to illustrate the religious condition of the Thyatira period, historically the middle ages beginning in the years of growing papal power. Here in this middle letter of the seven, Jesus shows a turning point, a great deciding place, pronouncing <u>great</u> tribulation (:22) on the Church unless it repents (thinks again and turns), because the people are listening to the harlot woman Jezebel. Jezebel is the same scarlet and purple clothed woman, the harlot called Babylon in Rev.17:1-6, with whom the kings of the earth commit fornication and whose wine of fornication makes the inhabitants of the earth drunk.

Primarily, the fornication has to do with the elicit relationship of church and state,

but it also relates to the unholy union of church and man-made organizations which purport to speak for God (Jas.4:4); it is the church turning to the arm of flesh for its sustenance and propagating power (Jer.17:5). This 'mother of harlots' is symbolic of false religion,- that which is alien to the true Spirit of Christ. So be careful what you hear (Mk.4:24), for there are many voices and they would deceive the elect, if it were possible (IJohn 4:1). Try the spirits to know which is the Spirit of God, He never denies the Blood or any of the Word. Jezebel teaches (what the ear will hear) and seduces (what the heart will feel). She does not set idols before you, you would not fall for that, she offers what appeals to your heart and to your appetites that which is contrary to the Word of God (2Tim. 4:3). The wisdom of the world is held up as bait. She has filled the earth with her abominations, and the inhabitants of the earth are drunk with the wine of her fornication. It was the same pattern with Eve, - it will make you wise, it is pleasant to look upon and good to eat - thus trampling the Word of God under foot. Likewise our children are fed polluted bread, and are trained to obtain worldly success. Christ calls for a complete separation from the forces of the world system, not to be of it, though we are in it. :21- Spiritual fornication is the inordinate love of the pleasures of life and desires of the flesh. Jezebel says drink deeply of all that life can give, but God's Word says live soberly, righteously and godly - here and now, and rejoice (Titus 2: 11-13).

The contaminated religion tries to divert the follower of Christ, but the overcomer insists on Jesus Christ being first and pre-eminent, remaining faithful to the Husband Jesus. :22-23- Except there be repentance, Jezebel and all those with her are to be cast into great tribulation (Rev. 18:4-8) and thus it is revealed that this church period extends to the end of the Age. During the past 1500 years, she has had much opportunity, but she does not repent and it is during the Great Tribulation that the great harlot will be decimated by the communist powers just as the dogs ate Jezebel's body after she was cast down and trodden under foot (2Kings 9:30-37). The time is drawing near when all these things which have been prophesied shall take place, so consider what is being said (Acts 3:21); even now you are being tried and even now He is searching your heart. The rewards (different than the gifts) are to be given according to what we will have done in union with Jesus Christ (Ro.2:6, Rev. 22:12). :24- As many as have not this false doctrine of Jezebel and have not explored and learned the depths of Satan, (meaning mystery or deep teaching) these will not have to bear any other burden but to hold fast to the Truth they already have.

:26-28- It is in the letter to Thyatira that there is first mention of the Great Tribulation

which comes at the close of the Church age. Mention of it is made in this letter to the 4th Church, because the apostate religious system which has become entrenched during the Thyatira period continues until the Tribulation and will be judged at that time. The initial fulfillment of the 4th promise to overcomers will come at the beginning of the Tribulation period when a 144,000 group of God's choicest saints is translated bodily and taken to Himself (Rev.14:3-4, 12:5). They will be given power over the nations during the Tribulation, functioning in glorified bodies with ability to appear and disappear on the earth. These will shepherd, rule in kindness and use the shepherd's rod on the willing sheep in gentle discipline, but for the unruly this ability will constitute the 'rod of iron' which will be used as the means to speak the Word of Christ and enforce His judgments (Ps.149:5-9). As Jesus received authority from the Father, so will He give them authority to implement His will among the nations, and those nations which will not heed their admonitions will be broken in pieces as an earthen vessel (Isa.30:12-14). This firstfruits 144,000 group of overcomers is also promised the 'morning star' which is the pledge of Christ's betrothal to them as the Bridegroom. It is the Star and the Sceptre (rod) (Num.24:17-19, Isa.11:4) that breaks the enemies of the Body of Christ, spiritual Israel (Gal. 3:7). The morning star (2Pet.1:19, Rev.22:16) comes out before the rising of the sun (God's full power - Mal.4:1-3). The firstfruits 144,000 group with Christ's very life is manifested first, then later the other virgins who follow, and in a very short time Jesus Christ with all His saints returns visibly in full glory which every eye in the general area of Palestine shall see. Many see the risen sun in all its glory, but few arise early enough to experience the morning star which appears first.

- Rev. 3 -

The 5th Church, Sardis (meaning those escaped, or the remains, or remnant). After many centuries of entrenched apostacy, the great reformers were raised up who protested the abuses and falsehoods of the Roman system and who brought the dawn of the Sardis era. The 5th Church fulfilled the number of freedom and liberation and also that of human weakness. The Scriptures began to be opened to them and they began to speak the truth with power. The development of printing and printing press enabled the distribution of portions of the Scriptures to multitudes and in time a mighty movement was sweeping across formerly Catholic dominated countries of Europe; Protestantism was being born in a coming forth from spiritual slumber and darkness, and for the first time in hundreds of years there was a large-scale spiritual awakening. :1 - The 7 stars indicate the coming forth of a true spiritual ministry and the 7 spirits show the working of the Spirit of revelation and power. In this way it was fulfilled that the Church of Re-

formation had a name (nature, character) that lived, but immediately Jesus said, "you are dead". Why? Although the reformers broke away from the dead forms of the Roman church, they very soon began in weakness to establish church systems patterned after their Catholic mother. They avoided the complete centralization of power, but in the same pattern they began erecting hierarchies of authority in man-made denominational councils and various clerical bodies. There was also the further turning to the 'arm of flesh' by entering into Church-State relationships in various countries, and what had sprung up as a living movement gradually crystallized into well-established, organized denominations with rigid lines of demarcation, fixed creeds and forms. The creedal battles during many years were a further deadening influence. :2 - Therefore the Lord warns "keep awake and strengthen and invigorate what remains and is on the point of dying", for He has not found the works perfect before God. :3 - "Remember what you received, obey that and repent or I will come as a thief" - (meaning 'pass you by without your knowing it' - until too late), as a thief who comes not to take cheap things, but to take the best and most precious (Mal.3:16-17). The Protestant denominations, along with their Catholic mother, will not be expecting the Lord's return, or know the pattern for His return, and will be taken completely by surprise. He surprises only those who have not allowed Him to prepare them (IThess.5:2-6). :4-5 - The few 'names' who <u>can</u> be confessed before the Father have not defiled their garments but have kept their inner soul garments clean. Initially washed in the Blood of the Lamb (Rev.1:5, 7:14), they have been <u>kept</u> continuously white and pure through obedience to the truth (John 15:14-15, IPet.1:22) and the use of the water of the Word (Eph.5:26-27, John 15:3, Ecc1:9 8). These 'names' shall walk with Jesus in white through being received by Him when He comes as a thief at the beginning of the Tribulation period, and through being clothed with their glorified bodies at that time. The overcomers in white rainment symbolizes the glorified bodies with which the translated saints will be clothed, and in its own realm such a body glows with the soft white light of the glory of God. When manifested on earth and appearing to those yet in physical bodies, the glorified body vibrates to the pitch of flesh and bone (Lk.24:39) and is as tangible as any flesh and blood body. But its sustaining principle is no longer the life in the blood, which links the body with the earth and its elements; the very life substance of God sustains it and relates it to the plane of divine life and light.

It is because the overcomer is so clothed that Jesus Christ is able to confess his name (nature, character) before the Father and before His angels; none except those so confessed will participate and none except those so clothed will ever be ushered into the presence of the

Most high God. To them is given the added assurance that under no circumstances will their name ever be removed from the Book of Life. They will be sons of glory, manifesting the life and light of God on their own plane, and also ministering to and watching over those who are yet on the earth plane. At the close of the Tribulation, these firstfruits overcomers will be joined by a great host as many more overcomers put on their garments of light and glory to be united with Jesus Christ in joint heirship and joint rulership of all that is His (Rev. 7:9-17). This 5th Church period too extends to the end of the Age.

:7 - Philadelphia (meaning 'brotherly love') represents the era of the great evangelical and missionary witness which carried the Gospel to many lands, and it began when the Protestant churches had become almost dead and ineffectual in testimony. Particularly in English speaking countries, individuals and small groups turned again to Jesus Christ, seeking revival because of the desperately wicked conditions prevalent. In answer to their cry, Jesus said of Himself that "He opens and no man shuts....". Here emphasis is placed on holiness of life and on presenting the Gospel of Truth to the ends of the earth, and flaming evangelists did rise, calling sinners to repentance, and missionary societies began to mushroom and thousands of missionaries went to heathen lands. Many movements arose placing emphasis on the simple life of the New Testament in faith and order, and other movements arose placing emphasis on holiness, sanctification and separateness from the world. Simultaneously with this spiritual resurgence, primarily in the English speaking world, Britain and the U.S.A. rose to positions of world leadership, setting an open door before the Church of the 19th century to present the Gospel witness throughout the world. These two greatest Christian nations had both the opportunity and the means presented to them, for, as sovereign King having the Key of the House of David (Isa.22:20-25), Jesus pledged that no man would shut that door. During the era of the 6th Church, He gave the Christian peoples an unprecedented opportunity with an open door to come unto the fulness of that number (the number of man), for on the 6th day God created man and said 'let him have dominion' (Gen.1:26). If God's people had been willing to pay the price, spiritual dominion could have come throughout the earth and the way prepared for a 20th century of righteousness and peace. But instead the 20th century has seen two world wars, many smaller ones and a third world war is now on the horizon. It has seen the beast of Communism arise to enslave multitudes of people and it has seen the rapid decline of British and the U.S.A. in world leadership. It is now seeing the power of entrenched evil fasten itself upon nations as never before, and the breakdown of law and order is a growing menace. It is seeing a rapid loss of individual liberties and increasing control by expanding socialistic governments. It is seeing unprecedented moral breakdown on all levels of so-

ciety and increasing deterioration of the organized churches into the practical infidelity of liberalism and modernism. All this is because God's people failed to use the open door set before them and to vigorously carry out the commission to evangelize the nations.

:8 - However, because of the faithfulness of a small remnant which has kept His Word and not denied His Name, He will continue to keep this door open even to the end of the Age and the Gospel of the Kingdom will yet be preached in all nations for a witness before the end comes (Matt.24:14). Because of the failure to carry forth the Word during the years when it would have been relatively easy, the battle will now be hard fought with much opposition. The cost will be great in now carrying the message to the ends of the earth, for the martyrs will be many as Satanic power in full fury rises to compass the earth. Those who truly love the Lord will have to give up most of their earthly wealth and possessions in order to remain true to the Lord and keep from receiving the mark of the beast on or in their foreheads or <u>on</u> their hands (Rev.13:16-17). The Church has "but little power", but God's Word will be fulfilled through His secret strategy. Unprecedented spiritual power will become available when He suddenly translates the 144,000 first-fruits group and commissions it to uphold and guide the end-time Body of Christ on earth and when He then pours out His Spirit in profusion in fulfillment of the end-time Pentecost (Joel 2:28-32). Through the supernatural guidance of His glorified ones and through the anointed ministry of His chosen saints on earth, the Word of God will go forth in power, accompanied by signs and wonders and miracles. So shall the true spirit of the Philadelphia church continue until the end - as do the periods of the Thyatira and Sardis churches - in order that a mighty harvest may be gathered and brought forth to meet Jesus Christ in the clouds. Even as the apostate Roman Church of the Thyatira period continues to the end of the Age to be cast into a bed of Tribulation (Rev. 2:22-23), and the dying Protestant Churches which have their inception in the Sardis era continue, but to be taken by surprise when Jesus comes as a thief in the night (Rev.3:3), so shall the faithful remnant represented by the Philadelphia Church continue as a witness of the Lord's faithfulness, until through that Church He has accomplished the fulfillment of the open door which no man can shut. The open door shall remain open, and even those nations which seem to be shut to a vital Gospel witness shall yet be penetrated with mighty revival.

:9 - After the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the <u>prepared</u> and waiting remnant, a mighty revival begins to sweep across the earth, and then the words of this verse shall be fulfilled. One of the great phenomena of the end-time revival will be the turning of many Jews to Jesus Christ as their Messiah, and the turning will be brought about by the unusual witness of those who have been specially prepared and commissioned for a

Spirit-powered ministry that will convict and convince. Many Jews who have been the Satan-impelled enemies of the Cross and the Christian Gospel will suddenly make an about-face and become outspoken witnesses for the truth. They will come in humility and repentance and in great contrition, and will sit at the feet of those who are gathered together in the spirit of the Philadelphia church, where the love of God is manifested in reality and power. Then they will become 'true Jews' indeed in the Spirit of the New Covenant of faith and then of circumcision of the heart (Ro. 2:28-29, 4:11), and they shall worship God in oneness of heart with those they had formerly despised.

:10 - This promise of keeping safe from the hour of trial to the faithful remnant appears in only two places, Lk.21:36 and here, and it has a two-fold application. First, it is to the 144,000 wise-virgin, firstfruits group which will be taken and translated into the heavenly realm just before the hour of great trial begins. They shall be redeemed from the earth to stand before the Son of Man so that they might be commissioned for duty among the saints remaining on earth during the Tribulation (Lk.21:36, Rev.14:1-4). Second, all remaining on earth who faithfully keep His Word and put their <u>complete</u> trust in Jesus Christ shall receive His protection and guidance so they will not be confused, confounded, or harmed by the trying events and circumstances of the Tribulation period. Among the protected ones, there will be those who will die for His Name's sake so that they might receive the martyr's greater reward, but their death will occur only because they have willingly agreed to make such a sacrifice. Until their time comes, they will be kept from all harm. :11 - The crown here too is the prize of the high calling, the heavenly calling for those who will be received into the heavenly Kingdom to rule and reign with Christ. Give diligence, therefore, to make your calling and election sure (2Pet.1:10-11), for the evil powers can deprive you of your crown. A crown is symbolic of ruling authority. Those joining the Lord in this Age are only those who are prepared to reign and rule with Him. Therefore, the one who misses being taken up in this Age, through lack of preparation, will lose the crown and will later fill a different position under those who do rule. The gathering up phrase 'coming soon or quickly' is used only 3 times, here and in the prologue and in the epilogue, and it denotes rapidity of fulfillment once the events starts - as with the birth of a child (IThess.5:2-3).

:12 - The overcomer will be made a pillar in the Body of Christ temple of God. A temple pillar is shaped by a skilled craftsman, is brought into the temple, is then in His Presence and remains there always. The 'temple' being built is a spiritual one made of living stones (IPet.2:5, Eph.2:20-22), and the stones are now being hewn and prepared in the quarry, as each overcomer yields to the

working of the Holy Spirit in his or her life. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone of this temple which is to be filled with the fulness of the glory of God and this temple will be fitly joined together, first on earth and then in the heavenlies. The type of what the Lord is now doing is shown in the Old Testament events which led up to the construction of the material temple of Solomon. David's reign is a type of the Christian dispensation, following the reign of Saul which is a type of the era of the law. David prepared in abundance for the temple before his death (IChron.22:1-5), but the temple was not actually joined together until Solomon began his reign, which is a type for the Kingdom era now at hand. So perfect was the preparation of the stones at the quarries before they were brought together at the building site that each stone fit in it's proper place without requiring hammer, axe, or any tool of iron. They very quietly and perfectly were fitted together while the temple was building (IKings 6:7). The building together of the glorious temple took place in Solomon's reign, but the stones of the building were cut out and prepared at the quarry before being joined together in the temple structure.

Therefore, the Lord must do a perfecting work in your lives now (at the quarry), for as living stones you must be prepared to take your place in that which He has chosen for you. Before long He will begin to move mightily to join together the living stones as a mighty witness to His power and glory. Even as Solomon was anointed King before David's death, the Day of the Lord (Solomon's reign) has it's inception before the Christian dispensation (David's reign) is completely over. The overlapping period is signaled and its imminence is announced by the initial blowing of the 7 Trumpets (Rev.8:2). Historically, this period had its inception during the years when the secret of atomic energy release was being unlocked and more specifically it began when the first atomic bomb was exploded. However, the actual joining together of Christ's glorious temple in power does not take place until the blowing of the 7th trumpet, when His secret strategy is implemented and the Holy Spirit is then poured out in a second Pentecost. The temple joined together on earth, as a witness to His Glory and to bring forth a mighty harvest as the one age is closing and another is beginning, will also be joined together in the heavenlies. Immediately following the Great Tribulation, a great host of overcomers will be joined to Christ in the heavenly Kingdom (Matt.13:39, Rev.7:9, 14, 14:14-16), being united with one another and with the firstfruits who preceded them (Rev.14:2-4). This glorified body of saints will then be the means by which Jesus Christ will dwell in the midst of the people who remain on earth within the confines of the earthly Kingdom, for those in the earthly Kingdom will receive constant teaching, guidance and counsel from the glorified saints.

During their progressive learning on earth and also in the heavenlies, those who are overcomers must receive spiritual impartation to enable progress toward obtaining their inheritance as joint heirs in the heavenly Kingdom. Therefore, provision is made to equip them with new 'names' (nature, character, influence) at each major step, by a writing or sealing (impressing) in the mind. In Rev.7:3, the servants are to be sealed (an impression formed) in their foreheads with the seal of the living God. In Rev.14:1, they are to have His 'name' and His Father's 'name' written in their foreheads. In Rev.3:12, Jesus says He will write upon him the 'name' of My God. The Greek word for seal means an impress. In ancient and even in more recent times, a seal was used to make a 'writing' on a soft substance such as moist clay or warm wax, much in the same way as we would use a signature by writing. Thus 'sealing' and writing would be synonymous and interchangeable. The writing of these 'names' has nothing to do with an outward inscription of any kind; the 'name' expresses Spirit impartations, making the recipients equal to the requirements for participation in and fulfilling their assigned positions. The 'name of My God' must be so written in the foreheads of <u>all</u> overcomers when they take on their glorified bodies, 'sealing' them for the Spirit-powered ministry that is to come forth in the Spiritual temple or Body in this end-time (Ezek.9:4-11, Rev.7:2-3, 14:1). At the start or end of the Great Tribulation, all who are to be received by Christ to enter His heavenly Kingdom and the New Jerusalem must be sealed. After the overcomers have been glorified, they also receive the 'name' (power potential) necessary for dwelling in the New Jerusalem which will have come down out of the upper heavens and be stationed in the stratosphere above the earth. This 'City of My God' will then be the home and headquarters for the glorified saints who will descend and ascend to and from earth in carrying out their duties. And finally, the glorified overcomers are also to receive the power-potential of 'My own new name' to fully equip them for ruling and reigning with Christ. Those who have met the minimum requirements of overcomers become candidates for 'sealing', when in glorified bodies, first, with the Father's 'name', bringing protection and enablement, second, with the 'name' of the New Jerusalem, and, third, with the new 'name' of Jesus Christ, in order to be equipped to reign and rule with Him.

But all who are to be effective servants of God in these end-times must also be sealed on earth by Jesus Christ on the forehead, in the mind (Rev.7:2-4, Heb.8:8-10, ICor.2:16). The servants here are first and primarily 'spiritual Israelites' (Gal. 3:7, 29) out of the end-time Christian nations; (Acts 15:14); although, later this same sealing procedure also applies to a firstfruits group in physical Israel. These respective groups are to be sealed before and are to precede their brethren in the events leading into the heavenly Kingdom. The small group of 'spiritual Israel' out of the

Philadelphia Church era (Rev.3:10) is to be kept out of the great hour of trial, and this timing is consistent with sealing before the angels loose the 4 winds of judgment which are mentioned in Rev.7:1. But note, all overcomers must be so sealed (Rev.3:12), whether before or during the Tribulation, if they are to enter the heavenly Kingdom. The seal of the living God (Jesus Christ) in Rev.7:2-3 is the same as the name of the Lamb in Rev.14:1. As previously mentioned (Rev.2:17), the term 'name' is used here to indicate the nature or the character and influence. Neither 'God' nor 'Father' are names as we normally define the term, but rather are titles. The personal name of the Father of Yahweh-Jesus has never been revealed. The only personal name of Deity revealed in Scripture is that of Yahweh (Old Testament) or Jesus (New Testament), who is the Son of the Father. Jesus calls the Father "My God" (Rev.3:12, Matt.27:46, John 20:17), and the titles 'God' and 'Father' indicate a relationship and a function. They indicate one who is a keeper over another. Yahweh-Jesus is our Keeper or God; and since we were brought into being by the Son (John 1:3, 10, Col.1:16), He is our Father also. The title 'God' and the title 'Father' can be applied either to the Son or to His Father (John 1:18, 20:28, Heb.1:8-9, 12:9), depending on who is the acting keeper, for there can be only one (acting) God in relationship to humans (Matt.6:24).

On earth, before heaven, there are four major steps which must be taken by each and every Christian, and every major step in a Christian's life requires his individual cooperation with the Lord. To cooperate, one has to know what is available at each step. He must then have a desire to cooperate, rather than to ignore or refuse, and he first must be qualified to cooperate, because the Lord does not allow for skipped steps (Ro.2:11). He must know how to cooperate, recognizing the Lord's design. He must act, believing the Lord is able to impart, once there has been qualification and the subsequent action. Finally, he must realize how to use what he has received, if there is to be any profit to him and if he is to progress toward and into the next step.

FIRST STEP. Change of allegiance from the world, and its dominion, toward God. The change is possible through a purchase transaction made by Christ. It is by His redemption (buying back), and the price was His life blood. The step is taken through recognition and application of the fact that the purchase has been made for all men (2Cor.5:19), and the step is effected through 'Head' knowledge and agreement with a personal association of the purchase. This step brings with it the promise of eternal life for all who continue to come toward God (John 6:37), even though they may not have reached Him to be in Him, and He in them.

SECOND STEP, which follows the first step. Entrance into Christ's Kingdom on earth as a citizen. The Kingdom was established firmly when Jesus Christ entered His glorified

life, and it became open for all who are interested to respond in the manner He requires. The step is taken through a heart acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord (ruler), by requiring Him as Lord, with the intent of allowing Him to be Lord (Ro.10:9-10). It is effected through a desire to have Him regulate our living process, and it is begun by issuing a specific and sincere invitation, an invitation because He is no man's servant. The second step necessarily involves a willingness for personal dedication to His will in thought and purpose and action (allowing Him to function as Lord). Not all who verbalize an invitation really mean to give their lives from the moment of invitation; only the Holy Spirit knows when the person has truly satisfied the requirements for taking the second step. The taking of the second step brings <u>possession</u> of eternal life. At the moment of fulfilling the requirements, the Holy Spirit plants the immortal seed of Jesus Christ (IPet.1:23) and the soul is permanently preserved by the implanting of the Word, Jesus Christ (Jas.1:21, Ro.6:23, 11:29). The second step is preparatory to receiving what we could call the complete baptism, water and Holy Spirit (two events). Knowledge of this step was lost in the darkness which followed the establishment of the Church in the first centuries, and was only re-discovered in the 1500's at a time when the thoughts of having to be 'born again' were officially considered to be heresy and led very close to burning at the stake.

THIRD STEP. <u>Citizenship</u> privileges and responsibilities. It is only in the third step that the Christian can begin to take up those things which are uniquely available to the citizens of Christ's Kingdom. Prior to this step, there may be the learning about and preparation for the life of a full citizen, but no person is ready for this step until Jesus has begun to be Lord in his life, and until there is an eagerness to dedicate his whole being to the will of God. The step is effected through conforming to the patterns given in Scripture for engaging what Jesus called the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, a 'burning out' by the Holy Spirit's power for progressively becoming a demonstration or witness of all the attributes of Christ (Matt.3:11-12). It is also called the 'seal' of the long-promised Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14), and it brings a preliminary taste of having the operation and experience of all the Kingdom citizenship rights, to the extent the 'sealing' is used. Through its purifying, comes a continuing eagerness to conform to the Lord's will in all things, manifesting of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), the gifts of the Spirit (ICor.12:7-11), and Christ's imparted righteousness (beyond His imputed righteousness), holiness and purity (IJohn 3:3, 7, IPet.1:15). A good definition of Christ's imparted righteousness is being conformed to God's will in every thought, purpose and action, a severing of all thought, purpose and action not conformed

to His will. This step is the instantaneous spiritual circumcision which is for the purpose of cutting off the 'flesh' or unchanged human nature so as to make room for Christ's nature (Col.2:11-12, Ro.4:11-12, I John 2:1, 6, Eph.4:21-24). This step brings the practical possibility of habitually living within the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16, Ro.6:3-6, 11). It is a step designed to be taken at the beginning of the Christian life (Matt.6:33) and its employment is prerequisite to qualify for the next step in being saved (IPet.4:18-19). The application and development of ability to live out the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship in the earthly Kingdom lead to having the mind of Christ in all things, and is preparation for the sealing with His 'name' or nature (Rev.14:1). It is the exercise in the third step which brings the Christian fully to the overcomer status, and only overcomers may be sealed with these 'names'. Knowledge of this third step was also lost during the dark centuries of Church history and, with very few exceptions, was re-discovered only in the early 1900's. Even now, most Christians either have no concept or only vague impressions of what the third step is for and how it fits into God's plan for man. Often it is viewed as a nice frill or extra. Sometimes it is viewed as a graduation ceremony after having 'really' become a Christian. Nothing could be more detrimental to a Christian's progress than these concepts, except a view which rejects this step as necessary.

FOURTH STEP. Ministry fulfillment on earth to parallel Christ's own ministry on earth. This step brings the granting of authority with power, absolute protection, the Lord's provision for every need, spiritual or physical, and the ability to walk and talk with God as directly as Adam did in the beginning. This step brings the imprinting of the name of our Father, Jesus Christ, which He too had after He fully overcame Satan in the wilderness (John 6:27). It is the seal of Christ's acceptance after having made the pattern of complete overcoming a firm and consistant pattern. It is a sealing that is now taking place among men in this day, on those who have seen the Lord's requirements for going further, who have believed in his Word and in His Life as a pattern for all men, who have prepared themselves in His pattern, and who have sought the Lord for all He offers. No person will ever enter His heavenly Kingdom, nor will any person ever reign and rule with Him, without first having received this sealing and without first having manifested the Christ 'name' or nature to fulfill the assigned ministry on earth. Although this message is not the text of today's sermons, the attainment to the fourth step and the way toward it should be the good news of this hour to every dedicated and Spirit-empowered Christian so he can prepare and so he can be ready within just the next few years for that tremendous new work of the Lord which will surpass anything and everything He has ever done with the human race. Our Lord just cannot come as He has faithfully

promised to come, until all things are fulfilled and until all opposition to His plans, including physical death, is under at least a few of the 'feet' of His Body (Matt.22:44, Acts 3:21, Ro.16:20, ICor.15:25-27, Heb.2:7-8). If all things at the consummation of the ages are now taking shape, what kind of person ought each of us to be in set-apart behavior and in godly qualities (2Pet.3:11-12)? This now is the hour of preparation for those who are awake and watching.

Why is it necessary to be sealed first with the Christ's name? It opens up the 6th covenant to the Churches, offered to overcomers (Rev.3:12), and prepares for and makes possible the 7th covenant of sitting with Jesus Christ on His throne (Rev.3 21), which consummates the overcoming cycle for those who are to rule and reign with Him. But there can be no reigning with Christ until the overcomer has the name of Christ and the name of His God, and the name of the New Jerusalem, and Christ's own new name written, impressed, or sealed upon him. The impressing of these names has to do with the preparation and progressive changes within the overcomer which makes possible the stepped-up power potential so necessary for those who are to reign and rule with Christ. We are to be as soft clay within in order to receive the divine impress or seal. Those who are not susceptible to these sealings simply cannot be among those who are being made ready for joint rulership with Christ in His Kingdom. Jesus is our pattern, as it is written, and He was to be the first (born) of many brethern (Ro.8:29, Eph.4:13).

In John 6:27, Jesus explains why He is able to fulfill His ministry in power and give a Living Word to the people, "because God the Father has sealed Him". For the same purpose and for the same reason, the Body of Christ overcomers must have Jesus Christ's seal, if they are to fulfill a ministry in His pattern in the end-time, because the sealing provides both a protection and an enablement for the ministry. This sealing is the end-time fulfillment of Jesus' high-priestly prayer (John 17:11, 23), "Holy Father, keep them in your name. . . . that they may be one as We are . . . that they may be perfectly united; and that the world may know that You have sent Me." In one sense, all who have accepted Jesus are His, but there is a special sense in which those of the overcoming Body (to be perfectly united, to manifest His glory, and to be joined to Him in His own heavenly Kingdom) are His by gift of the Father. These are His inheritance (Eph.1:18), His fulness (Eph.1:23), His Bride and His household (Eph.5:25-32, 2:19), to share in His calling (Eph.1:18, Heb.3:1) and to be with Him forever. The 'name' of Jesus Christ was a copy of that of His Father (John 14:9). Therefore they too are to be especially kept (sealed) by their Father's name in the end-time. Surely Jesus' prayer will be especially fulfilled in this

end-time when those whom His Father has given Him shall be specifically kept (sealed) through that name.

The sealing not only provides divine protection, but also divine enablement. Just as a sealing leaves a definite impress, so there is a specific impartation to the one who is sealed (John 6:27). In so doing, Jesus glorified God on earth (John 17:4), and He could do so only through manifesting the essence of God's being and nature, that which God is, His name. Those who are sealed with the Christ's name in this end-time are going to manifest His power and glory as no people have ever done before, and this will require a special divine impartation and enablement.

For further illustration of the name-impartation principle, see Ex.23:20-21 where the Lord's name is in the angel, indicating that the vibration or radiation of His own being, as well as His power-presence, was in the angel, making him equal to the occasion. We cannot separate the Lord's name from that which He is and that which He manifests. There is the same principle in type where the Lord said He would choose a place where He would put His name or where He would cause His name to dwell (Deut.12:5, 11, 21, 14:23-24, 16:2, 6, 11), referring to the future temple (IKings 8:16-29, 9:3, 11:36). He did not need to literally inscribe His name on the temple because He was talking about a living reality within it. His name in the temple was the shekinah glory which dwelt in the Holy of Holies and which was a vibrational representation of His own being and power. Under the New Covenant, our bodies are the living temple (ICor.3:16-17, 6:19) for receiving His name.

At the present time in these mortal bodies (the portable tabernacle), through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, we have the vibrational essence of the Lord's redemptive name, Jesus, from Joshua or Yoshua, meaning Yahweh is Savior. After we receive our glorified bodies (of which Solomon's glorious temple was a type) which will be necessary for dwelling in the heavenly Kingdom and the New Jerusalem, we shall receive the power essence of His new name (Rev.19:12, 22:4-5), making us equal to the occasion of ruling and reigning with Him. But first, while still here in mortal bodies, we must have the Christ's name written or sealed on our minds and hearts (Heb.8:10). Jesus is still making intercession (Ro.8:34) as a continuation of the John 17 prayer that those given Him by the Father would be kept (sealed) and be perfectly united into one spiritual body with special enablement for a spirit-powered end-time ministry to fulfill and consummate Christ's own ministry on earth. The many sons (Ro.8:29, Heb.2:10-13, Isa.8:18) cannot be separated from the Son, and they must be sealed even as Jesus was (John 6:27). Because the ministry of His Body cannot be fulfilled without the Living Word being bound up and sealed in the mind (Isa.8:16), the seal of the Yahweh-Jesus is to be placed on

the forehead, the mind, just as the verses John 5:19, 30, 8:28 indicate by example that the mind is to be completely sealed, completely 'possessed' by the Will and Word of the Father, with the essence of the Father's very being and nature. Here is the evidence of a mind so sealed with the Father's name, through which sealing Jesus knew only His will, saw, heard and then spoke only His Word. This is also the pattern for the end-time Body of Christ and Christ will attest to this by putting the seal of His name upon those who have been tested and proven to follow fully in the footprints of Jesus in doing only the Father's will. The impressing would indicate a stamp of approval and a choice. In Rev.17:14, those who are with the Lamb during the final battle of the ages are the 'called and chosen (sealed) and Faithful', those totally committed to His will.

Those who are sealed with the Christ's name are those who are being prepared for manifest sonship. A father does place and leave his name in his sons, and Jesus was the pattern Son (John 6:27), sealed into full sonship. Those who are sealed with the Christ's name written in their foreheads (Rev.7:3) are those who have come into a minimum maturity of sons of God and are thus being made ready for manifestation. No son is ready to put on immortality, whether to earthly or heavenly glory, until sealed in the forehead with the Christ's name.

The Old Testament high priest is a type, not only of Christ, but also of His Body (ICor.12:12). Only the high priest could go beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies, on the great day of atonement, but before entering he had to be properly clothed. Special garments were made for glory and for beauty (Ex.28:2). A part of these garments was the mitre or turban for the head, upon which was a plate of gold inscribed with engravings, like a seal or signet, of the words 'Holiness to Yahweh' (Ex.28:36), and this engraving was to be on the high priests' forehead (Ex. 28:38). The garments of the high priest are a type of those with which the Body of Christ must be clothed and adorned before entering the Holy of Holies beyond the veil, and the engraving or seal upon the forehead, 'Holiness to Yahweh', is included. We must become partakers of His holiness (Heb.12:14). His righteousness must be fulfilled in us (Ro.8:4) by being woven into the very fabric of our mind and soul as with a garment of finely twined linen (Rev.18:8). Going beyond the veil, as His spiritual Body, means entering His fulness for a spirit-powered ministry, and also, in time, entering into the heavenly Kingdom which He has prepared for those who love Him (John 14:21) and who are to reign and rule with Him.

"This is the day of My sealing, says the Lord, for even now am I sealing for this day. Listen closely, for this is what I would have you know. Those whom I seal are My seal of authority to the people, for to be sealed is to come into a realm of authority that is not known by the average Christian, not even by those sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph.1:13-14). Those I seal shall be used by Me to speak My words with power and authority, even as the words fell from the lips of the Son of God, for Him

had the Father sealed (John 6:27), and that word shall be confirmed by My power, says the Lord.

Would you be used by Me in this day? Then seek Me with all your heart and soul and being. Give yourself unreservedly to Me, for those I use in this end-time shall without fail give themselves to Me and to Me only, that they may gain the realm of service and glory to their God where nothing matters but the consuming desire to be one with their God on the altar of sacrifice, that they may be a sweet smelling savour to Him in this day. There must be no compromise and no delay for those who would hear His voice and be sealed for an end-time ministry to their God. For even now this sealing progresses and soon its first phase will be consummated; then shall fury break forth on the earth. But those whom I have sealed shall speak forth My word with authority and power and I will confirm that word, says the Lord.

In addition to the granting of authority with power, in this sealing there is an absolute protection by their God. Those who are sealed cannot in any way be destroyed or be harmed by the enemy, for I will put a wall of fire around them and that which comes against them shall be consumed, says the Lord (Zech.2:4-5). For is it not written that nothing shall harm those that are sealed (Ezek.9:4-6)? Truly I will protect them and keep them from all the power of the enemy (Prov.19:23, 28:18). Only that which has been decreed beforehand shall be done to them, and only that portion which they have willingly agreed to shall be theirs. For I am not a God that lies or does not keep that which I promise; but what I promise, that I will do.

For those who have agreed, there shall come a time of decision as to what path they shall take, and they can determine whether to give themselves in life or in death. If they choose the latter way, then they shall be placed in My hand to do with as I will, and, even as the Son of God who went before and set the pattern, so shall they be required to lay down their lives for My sake. But this shall not be a matter of compulsion, but of voluntary sacrifice, even that sacrifice of My saints which has been ordained for this hour. For even as the Son of God laid down His life, so must they lay down their lives for the brethern. This is that which is spoken of in Rev.6:9-11, where it says that those who have gone on are waiting for their brethern who shall be killed for the sake of the gospel. Therefore I say to you, some of those who are sealed and are under the absolute protection of their God shall lay down their lives, even as Isaac (in type) laid down his life and was received from the dead. For they are the 'sons of promise' in a special way, who shall inherit a more excellent name even as the Son of God inherited a more excellent name than His brethern (Heb.1:4 - angel means messenger or agent who can also be a man

(Mal.2:7, Matt.11:10, Gal.4:14), therefore, brethern). They also shall receive a more excellent position in the Kingdom of God, because they have laid down their lives.

But not all who are sealed shall lay down their lives, for there are those who shall be taken without the experience of death, even the firstfruits who shall be taken out (Rev.14:1-5). They shall also inherit a more excellent name, because they have been willing to be prepared ahead of time and have lived a life of holiness and separation to Me, and have not contaminated themselves with the harlot systems of the world. Even so have they kept themselves pure to Me. So they shall be taken without having to lay down their lives in death, for truly they were willing to lay down their lives in life and make with Me a covenant of sacrifice (Ps.50:1-5), even a living sacrifice to Me. Therefore, they shall be taken and receive a name above all others, says the Lord.

Those who fail to make this kind of a living sacrifice, <u>if</u> they desire the greater glory of the martyr's crown, shall be required in this last day to make that greater sacrifice of laying down their physical lives for the sake of the gospel, even as the martyrs of old. This will be because they have not been willing previously to make the kind of living sacrifice necessary for Me to keep them from all the defilements of this world, that I might take them to Myself before that great day of tribulation comes. For those I take shall be a helpmate with Me in the heavens in the time of trouble and I will use them mightily for My glory, says the Lord.

Others shall be sealed during the time of great Tribulation, even as some are being sealed now, but first come the firstfruits who shall be sealed and taken up to Me before the Tribulation. I say to you that many of these have been sealed already and even now are anticipating My call to them. Secondly, there are those being sealed now who shall wear the martyr's crown. If they are willing, they shall lay down their lives for the sake of the gospel in the Tribulation impending. Others are now being sealed who will not aspire to the glory of the martyr's crown, but shall indeed be used mightily by Me in the days ahead, says the Lord. These, along with that great company which shall be sealed during the Tribulation, shall be received unto Me in My Kingdom at the close of the Tribulation. But I say to you, those who are being sealed before the Tribulation and who are willing now to give themselves wholly to Me, these, I say, shall have a greater crown of glory than those who are sealed during the Tribulation, because they have been willing to be prepared ahead of time, even before the hour of trial impels all men to make a choice (Rev.3:10). Now is the time to lay yourself down on My altar as a living sacrifice so that, even if you may not be among those firstfruits to be taken ahead of time, you

shall receive a crown of glory that shall shine as the stars in their brilliance. Concerning those who shall be sealed during the time of tribulation, they too shall have a choice placed before them, and those who aspire to the glory of the martyr's crown shall have an opportunity to lay down their lives for the gospel's sake. I say this is a voluntary choice, for My seal of protection shall be upon them, and they shall choose whether to give themselves in life or in death, and thus in giving themselves so shall be their lot and glory in the coming Kingdom.

Except for the firstfruits which are taken out, those who have laid down their lives in death shall be received into glory first, even as the two witnesses mentioned in Rev.11:11-12. They shall be the first to meet with their Lord and receive the crown of glory awaiting them. Then shall a great host of living ones follow them shortly and be translated without seeing death (ICor. 15:51-54, IThess.4:13-17), and so shall they ever be with the Lord to fill their place in the Kingdom, according to that which they have chosen, says the Lord.

In addition to the granting of authority with power and absolute protection, there is a third element in the sealing. It is even a sealing of the Lord's <u>provision</u> for the hour of trial, for the Lord will provide that which is needed, whether physical or spiritual. The sealing provided for the abundant resources of your God to accomplish that which He has commissioned the sealed ones to do. Even now they shall look to the Lord to provide all their needs and they shall not fear, says the Lord. Did not I feed My people in the wilderness, and am I not the same God today? And did I not feed My servant Elijah by the ravens when there was a drought in all the land? Even so shall I provide for them out of the abundance of My resources, says the God who is your Keeper. Therefore, trust Me and know for a surety that I will keep you and provide for you in that day.

Then there is the final factor in the sealing, which brings the very presence and fellowship of your God to walk and talk with you as I did with Adam in the beginning. For those I seal shall know My voice and I will commune with them and talk with them, and they shall know that it is I, the Lord, who does speak to them. And if they shall obey My voice and hear that which I speak to them, so shall I continue to speak to them and bring them understanding. Even so shall I control their minds and thoughts as they yield themselves to Me in perfect obedience, says the Lord." (end of prophecy given in 1967).

Where are those who understand what the Lord is doing? Where are those to whom the Lord has revealed Himself? Is there not an instrument in the land that the Lord can use to reveal Himself to the people? Is there no one who is receptive enough to the things of the Spirit that He can make known His purposes for this day? The Lord is looking across the land to find

vessels that He may use for His glory. He is looking for a people to be His light and His glory in this day, waiting patiently for those to whom He can declare His ways and through whom He can show Himself strong in this day.

However, a vessel does not boast of itself, when it is only a container for something else, and neither does an instrument boast of itself when it is being wielded by someone else. A vessel emptied and prepared by the Lord for the glory He shall put in it, and an instrument used in His hand to accomplish His purpose for this day have no basis for boasting. What the Lord has need of is vessels into which He can pour His glory so that the excellency of that power may be of Him and not of man. He also has need of instruments which He may use in His hand, but the vessel and the instrument are one. First, one must become a vessel into which He can pour Himself, to be filled with His glory and His power, and then one shall become an instrument in His hand.

Of course, there are instruments which He uses that have not first become vessels. The Lord has the use of any person, or nation, or force that He chooses as an instrument for His purpose, but this is not what He is seeking, for this kind of instrument is not to His glory. Such an instrument may magnify Him in the eyes of some as they behold that which He is able to accomplish by His mighty hand through whomsoever He chooses, but this is not what He is seeking. The Lord is seeking that which will submit to Him in total obedience so that what He does may not just show forth His power, but His holiness, His virtue, and His kindness, so that what He does may show forth the glory of His person and make all men realize He is a God of love and compassion, as well as a God of power. Such a vessel and instrument was the Lord Jesus Christ who was perfectly yielded to the Spirit of God to do all that He wished. Now also He is seeking other vessels for demonstrating God's glory in this day, as He did in the day of Jesus Christ. The Lord will show forth His glory in the vessels which He has found in this day, those who have sought and do seek God so they may be found worthy of all that has been prepared for them.

What must one do to become a vessel for the Lord? First, there must be a complete emptying of one's self. He will not allow a mixture in that which is His working; it must be all of Him and none of self. He cannot use vessels in this day which are even a little bit filled with their own desires and plans and selfish ways. There must be a complete emptying of self, and then only can the Lord fill with that which will bring honor to Himself, that which is not a mixture, but which is pure and true. The vessel must empty itself completely, and then let the Lord fill it.

There must be an appropriation by faith of that which is

available, because the Lord will pour nothing into the vessel that is not received by an act of specific faith and reaching out (James 1:6-8). Search out, reach out, and receive that which the Father has made available in His Word, for how can you appropriate a thing of which you know nothing? Seek Him in His Word, believe that which is spoken, and He shall begin to fill your vessel with that which He has made available. Then He would have you use and pour out that which He has placed within you. Just as water becomes stagnant when it remains unmoved, so shall you become stagnant if you do not let that which is within you pour out to others. As you pour out, the Lord will pour in, and you will be full and running over.

The vessel must be continually available for the Lord's cleansings, for removal of any deposits or accumulation of debris which might be in the vessel. The enemy is always ready to slip things in on the sly so as to contaminate that which the Lord is putting within the vessel. Therefore, you must constantly search out your own heart (although not focusing on introspection, which can be devastating), in order that those deposits which have resulted from accepting Satan's deception be removed from your vessel, and keep it clean and pure before the Lord.

Finally, drink only the pure water of the Word and avoid the writings of men, unless it should be that which the Lord would instruct you to read. There are those whom the Lord has raised up with a message for this hour, but they are very few. Most writings of men contain such a mixture of truth and error that they only bring confusion; therefore, let the Lord fill your vessel with the pure water of the Word. If you will do this, then His Spirit shall teach you and your vessel will be full and overflowing, and then you shall be ready to be used by the Lord as an instrument in His hand, for the vessel and the instrument are one. First, you must be a vessel fit for the Master's use, and then you shall become an instrument in His hand.

The Lord is looking across the land, seeking vessels. So many want to be instruments, but they are unwilling first to become prepared vessels. Because of their unwillingness to yield themselves wholly to the Lord, He can use them very little. The land is full of unprepared vessels who want to be instruments, but there are so few who are willing to become vessels prepared (Matt.6:33). So continue to seek the Lord so that He might reveal Himself to you, and think not that you can become a mighty instrument, until first He has prepared you as a vessel.

:14 - The final letter of the 7 was given for the Church of Laodicea and, in this case also the name pictures its condition. Laos means laymen and dicea means right or justice, so the characteristic of this Church is a 'righteous' showing through man-developed organiza-

tion. The Church of Laodicea portrays the final era of the Christian dispensation and the prevailing conditions extant in the man-organized church world as this Age draws to a close.

Jesus is presented as the faithful and true witness in contrast to the unfaithfulness and distorted witness in this final period. He is also presented as the beginning of the creation or original formation of God, because of the inception of the new thing He will do as this Laodicean era comes to a close. God will raise up a mighty witness in the remnant being called out of the Babylonish church systems and that group will manifest the power and glory of that new creation which is coming forth through Christ's resurrection life. He is the firstborn among many brothers so there shall be many who will come to that measure of maturity which will permit Jesus Christ to unveil them as sons of God, giving them immortality for their physical bodies (Ro.1:4, Lk.20:36, Ro. 8:19, 23, 2Tim.1:10). Some will put on the glory of the celestial as their bodies are changed into the likeness of His glorious body (Phil.3:21) and others will manifest sonship on the terrestial plane, having their bodies changed from corruptible to incorruptible (ICor.15:40-42, 53-54). There will be the 144,000 group before the Tribulation, a handful plus the two witnesses at the beginning of and during the Tribulation, and many thousands at the end of the Tribulation who will experience a changing of their mortal bodies either into celestial immortal bodies to reside in the heavenlies, or into earthly incorruptible bodies to live into the Millenium Age, each one as a manifested son of God.

The word 'mortal' means 'dying from the forces of corruption and decay that are at work in the physical body, eventually making that body subject to death'. The word 'immortal' means simply 'not mortal' or 'not dying'. In such an immortal or incorruptible body the forces of corruption and decay are not at work, and, therefore, the body would not be subject to death but would continue to live indefinitely in perpetual youth. Such a body would not wear out under the stress of time as a mortal body does. We have our example in Jesus Christ, for He is the way. If Jesus had not voluntarily given up His life as a ransom for sinners, He could have continued to live indefinitely, and could be living today in the same physical body that walked in Palestine over 1900 years ago. The Bible says the wages of sin is death (Ro.6:23) so how could Jesus be subject to death (sin's wages) since He Himself never sinned? Also, if He were mortal at the time of the crucifixion and thus subject to death Himself, He could not have given His life as an effective ransom for others.

Jesus was born of mortal woman, even though virgin born, and He had a physical body which was potentially capable of corruption and death, <u>if</u> He had followed in the path of other men (Heb.2:14-15). Because Adam sin-

ned, all have sinned and the result of Adam's sin is passed on to all men (Ro.5:12), all except Jesus who did not sin. Jesus was tempted in all points as we are but did not sin (Heb.4:15); and He fully overcame the world, the flesh and the devil. After His final contest with Satan in the wilderness following His complete baptism He came forth totally victorious to begin His ministry as a fully manifested Son of God. He was the first human (He constantly used the term 'son of man') to manifest deathless life in the physical body since Adam and Eve, completely undoing the effects of their fall and opening up the way for a restored deathless paradise on earth, by yielding up His own sinless life as a perfect ransom (ITim.2:5-6). Of course, Jesus was also fully divine by reason of the God-Spirit with whom He was incarnate. If Jesus had been mortal only, His life's blood could not have atoned for the sins of the world. It was the God-life coursing through His veins that accomplished this cleansing of all when vicariously spilled on the cross. But of necessity, it had to be a sinless life that was yielded up, not a life subject to death.

The life is in the blood (Lev.17:14), but physicians also say the blood is the seat of disease, and in fallen man that 'life' in the blood can sustain the physical body only a certain number of years and then it yields to death working through corruption and decay. But when Jesus fully overcame the temptations of the enemy, when He proved Himself the complete master over Satan and the world and the flesh desires, His blood stream was changed from potentially corruptible to incorruptible, - not yielding to decay and death (Lk. 4:1-2, 13-14, 28-30, 41). Where is this told to us? Jesus demonstrated this truth in symbolic form by His first miracle at the beginning of His ministry. He came to manifest His glory (John 2:11) and He began with this appropriate miracle, - the turning of water into wine (John 2: 1-11). Jesus identified wine with His blood at the last supper. "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:27-28). Here Jesus is referring to a matured wine when speaking of His blood, because in Palestine the grapes are harvested in September and Jesus was using the wine in the spring - at the Passover time. Fresh grape-juice or new wine has no keeping qualities of its own and is subject to souring and spoiling but a matured wine has been changed so that it has indefinite keeping qualities and it can also preserve that which is immersed in it. Fresh grape-juice or new wine (beginning to ferment) is a type of the blood in a mortal which is subject to spoilage, death and putrefaction. Common human blood courses with the desires of the flesh, typified by the natural sugars in the grape-juice, but the blood of an 'immortal' is typified by a fully matured wine in which the sugars are transformed into spirit. The blood of Jesus did not course with sin, neither was it subject to corruption and death. His blood, like matured

wine, had keeping qualities and was able to cleanse and preserve things immersed in it.

Jesus not only performed this first miracle to show symbolically what had taken place in His own physical body, but also to show that which would be available to others through His vicarious atonement (Eph.2:4-5). This miracle, a parable in living drama, took place on the 3rd day (John 2:1), and with God a day is as a thousand years (2Pet.3:8). Because that generation to which Jesus came failed to fully believe in His finished redemption and failed to appropriate the deathless immortality for the physical body then available, a period of 'wilderness wandering' was decreed. This period is pictured in a number of places in the Bible as approximately two days or two thousand years. However, the miracle shows that on the third day, after 2000 years, the way would <u>again</u> be opened up for an entrance into the promised land of immortality in human flesh. According to Bible reckoning, the Lord's perfect year is 360 days, not 365, AND WE ARE NEAR THE INCEPTION OF THE 3rd DAY, when as many as qualify are to experience full salvation (IThess.5:23, Heb.9:28).

In the miracle-parable there were 6 waterpots which Jesus commanded to be filled with water. Six is man's number and the physical body is referred to as an earthen vessel (2Cor. 4:7). Water is a type of the soul within the physical body (Jas.1:6-8, Jude 13), and water is also a type of the cleansing of the Word (John 15:3, Eph.5:26) and the working of the Spirit (John 7:37-39). These earthen vessels (waterpots) were filled to the brim with water, indicating a complete work of the Word and the Spirit reaching into the depths of the human soul until every taint of sin and uncleanness is removed and the full fruit of the Spirit has been imparted. When this point has been reached and the individual has fully understood and met the requirements, fully believing that death is no more, then the water is turned to wine. Here is pictured a transformation of the soul elements (water) in the human (6) bodies (earthen waterpots) to that of an incorruptible blood stream (wine) and the result is immortality in human flesh.

Although an immortal in human flesh cannot die, in the sense that mortals do, yet the life of an immortal can be yielded up for God's purpose, if He so decrees it. Jesus said "No man takes My life, I lay it down Myself" (John 10:18). An immortal is under the absolute protection of God and nothing can happen to him unless permitted by God; it would have been impossible for anyone to have killed Jesus if He had not willingly yielded up His life. Even on the Cross He did not die until He personally dismissed His Spirit into the hands of the Father (Lk.23:46). Then when His body was in the tomb, it did not suffer corruption (Acts 13:33-37, Ps.16:10), because His physical body was loosed from the pangs of death

and because it was impossible for Him to continue to be controlled or retained by it (Acts 2:24). Death had no dominion over Him in the sense that it could not hold Him, - not just because He was divine, but because He was a sinless human not subject to death. He was humanity's first manifested Son, with a physical body that tasted death only because He laid down that life - as a ransom for sinners so that He might experience death for each individual person (Heb.2:9-11). Of that first Man to become a manifested son it was said,"I knew Him not, but it is in order that He should be made manifest to Israel....."(John 1:31), and "He manifested forth His glory"(John 2:11). Now, instead of the manifestation or unveiling of The Son, there is to be the manifestation of the sons (Ro.8:19). The Scripture does not say that all creation is waiting for the glorified Christ to be manifested or revealed from heaven, although that certainly will take place. First there must be an unveiling or uncovering of the end-time sons of God,who will go forth in a ministry of deliverance to a creation that is groaning and travailing in pain (Ro. 8:22). These sons, just a handful in number, will have entered immortality in human flesh, even as Jesus did when He walked upon the earth. After the rebellion of Gen.3:22, man was not permitted to eat of the Tree of Life, lest he should live forever in human flesh. When Jesus Christ came as man to further develop His divine plan for man, He came as the first Man who would open the way to deathless life again and to impart the way. Now again, man is permitted to eat of the Tree of Life which is the very life of Jesus Christ, to whose image we are to be conformed so that He might be the first Son among many sons (Ro. 8:29).

:15-16 - Insipid lukewarmness showing no evidence of the Lord's control and empowerment, is the chief characteristic of the church in this end-time and He spews the entire man-organized church out of His mouth, both Catholic and Protestant. This does not mean He repudiates those individuals who truly believe in Him and are yet in the organized systems, but before the end comes they must hear His call, "Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins and that you receive not of her plagues" (Rev.18:2-8, Isa.48:18-20, Jer.50:6-9).

:17-19 - A contributing factor to the spiritual lukewarmness of the present day church world is the prosperity which abounds in most western nations. A feeling of smug complacency has blinded the churches to their spiritual poverty and their desperate need. Clothed in their own self-righteousness, they know not their nakedness in God's sight. Therefore He has raised up messengers to expose and rebuke the carnality, apostacy and ineptness of the spiritually destitute churches. God is calling for repentance in action - not just emotion. He is moving in His providence to bring chastening through adverse conditions in civil life and international affairs, and conditions will be-

come so severe that the people of predominately Christian nations will either repent or perish. It is because of God's great love for those who do not know their folly and it's consequences that He rebukes and chastens (Heb.12:5-9). Those who are asleep and on the path to destruction, He must waken, otherwise there would be no hope.

There is a great need now for 3 things which the Lord offers. 1. Gold refined in the fire. God is a symbol of true spiritual character, brought about by the working of His Spirit, (developed through our acts of cooperation) and refined in the crucible of testing experiences (IPet.1:6-7). God must have a people who are completely receptive to His workings in their inner being and thoroughly purged of the dross of their own ways. 2. White garments. These are a symbol of those righteousnesses (plural in the Greek) and purity which only God can impart. Only those who are fully clothed with this raiment can enter into the end-time ministry of that spiritual Body He is raising up (IPet. 4:17-18, Matt.22:8-14). 3. Eye Salve. Only the revelation of the Holy Spirit giving spiritual sight, can cause you to see the mighty truths which God would have you know in this hour. Bible study and listening to man is not enough. Knowledge is not necessarily revealing (Heb.4:2, Ro.8:2-7). And since His counsel is to buy these from Him, there is a price that must be paid. That price is simply the total willingness to let Jesus Christ have your life to do with it as He pleases, because only as there is complete yielding and obedience can He be the means of bringing to your life pure gold, imparting to you white garments, and anointing your eyes to see His truth.

:20 - This is the day that Jesus is offering to make Himself real to people as never before in history and He longs to have the intimate communion described in this verse, but so few want to invite Jesus in to take complete control of their lives (John 15:4-5). To those who will open their hearts and let Him have His way in them, He is ready to show Himself strong in their behalf. No other generation has had as great an opportunity as He offers in this hour. He stands at the door (the door of the church and the door of the Christian) and knocks; the choice is yours. In these last days all who call upon themselves the 'Name' of the Lord (His nature, character and authority) shall be saved (Acts 2:21, John 14: 21, 23).

:21 - The final promise to overcomers in the 7 letters is that they will sit on the throne of Jesus Christ with Him, through the same process by which He overcame and was seated with His Father on His throne. Even though Jesus was the Son of the Highest, functioning on the plane of Deity, He emptied Himself and took on the form of man that He might overcome as a man (Phil. 2:5-9, Heb.2:14-15). He overcame and then was highly exalted and given a place of rulership on the throne of His Father and

became the pattern for all those who love Jesus and let Him bring them into an overcoming experience, rising above the spiritual level of most Christians. To overcome means to rise above, to come up over to a higher spiritual plane, but it comes only through greater yielding and submission to His will. The time is coming soon when Jesus Christ will sit upon the throne of His glory in the heavenly Kingdom which will be set up in the realms surrounding the earth. Then shall the overcomers of the past 2000 years be exalted to sit on that throne with Him and they shall be kings and priests to rule with Him over the earth (Rev.1:6, 5:10, 20:4). Truly this is the PRIZE of the high calling, both joint heirship on the plane of glorified life and joint rulership with Christ in His Kingdom. This 7th promise consumates the overcoming cycle, placing the overcomer on the throne of Christ, sharing His rule. He who is able to hear (every born-again Christian), let him hear and obey what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.

SUMMARY OF THE CHURCH ERAS

The people of today and of this Age are like those of old who turned from their God unto idols, like Aaron who made a golden calf for the people, because their hearts were set to respond to their own desires. The idols of gold and silver which the people of this day have made to themselves are the fruits of their desire. This people has sought out those who, like Aaron, have listened to their desires, instead of hearing the voice of the Lord. In this application, Aaron represents the religious leaders of today who have made idols for the believers to worship, and they have gone after that which satisfies the desire of the eye and the pride of life. They have erected that which is pleasing to fleshly pride in making themselves vast systems and organizations which exalt the pride of man and give glory to the works of man's hands. Therefore, the indignation of the Lord has come up into His face and He is about to bring judgment on the idolatrous systems of man, because 'Aaron' has submitted to the desires of the people and has led them astray. Therefore, the Lord God will cause this which Aaron symbolizes here and all his idols to cease, for the day of His judgment is near at hand. Aaron (meaning enlightened) was among those called up to the holy mountain to behold the glory of God. His sons, Nadab (liberal) and Abihu (he is my father - fundamentalist) were present also and they all beheld the glory with Moses and the 70 elders (Ex.24:9-11). In this event is pictured that which God brought about at the beginning of our Age, when He poured out His Spirit (Acts 2:16-17). He caused His chosen ones to behold Him, to enter into the glories of His presence and power, and to eat of the good things of the Word and the Covenant. Soon, however, the desires of the flesh

began to creep in, and the aspirations and pride of life began to ferment, and shortly there began a decline from the spiritual peak to which Jesus Christ brought at Pentecost to those who were recipients of His covenant. After a period of time, idolatry began to take root in the hearts of the people, and they clamored for something more tangible. Also, in Aaron's pattern, men who aspired to be something in the eyes of the people began to come to the fore. The result was a gradual turning away from the pure Word and teachings of the apostles, and to the forming of the creeds and doctrines (teachings) of men. Following this came the actual fulfillment of the apostacy of Aaron, and the idolatrous system of the Church-State combination was formed, Catholic and Protestant. This combination is the golden calf which was made by the priesthood to keep the people in bondage to the spirit of Egypt and to lead them away from the Truth.

Then came the time for judgment, and down from the mount came Moses (meaning drawing out), as a type of Christ. His absence accounted for the lapse of the people, for they said they did not know what was become of Him (Ex.32:1-4). This record prophetically pictured the time when Jesus was taken up into the heavenly mountain (kingdom) to remain with the Father, for it was after His ascension that the people lapsed into idolatry. It was during His absence that the forces of evil took over, but, true to the pattern, the Lord shall return to judge His people. He is even now coming in Spirit to bring recompense to His adversaries and to call a people to Himself, He is now raising up those who will wield the sword of judgment to bring division in the camp, (Lk.12:51-52). Without the ferment of division, His purpose cannot be accomplished, and so into the religious camps He will send those who are prepared to wield His sword of judgment.

As Aaron pictured the religious idolatry of this day, so has the Word been patterned to portray that which will subsequently take place. Those who are gathered to the Lord are those typified by the Levites who stood with Moses at the gate of the camp (Ex.32:26-27). The Levites, in this application, pictured the end time Body which shall separate itself from the idolatry of the people and stand with Jesus Christ in this last day, and He will use them mightily.

The rewards promised to overcomers in the 7 assemblies of called-out ones are progressive awards for having reached certain levels as the individual overcomer continues to grow in his spiritual development. Not all will reach candidacy for every award, but the invitation is open to each and every person. They start at the beginning of spiritual growth and follow through to the glory that is of Christ.

The promises are made to those with a singleness of hearing (who have an ear, not ears), those who

are responsive to the voice of Light into Life. There are very specific promises directed to each of the 7 Church eras, to the individuals living in the respective era. And in the conclusion of the concluding age of the series of ages, the promises are to those individuals whose particular weakness corresponds to that which is implied in the Church, that Church which specifically represents that weakness or condition.

1. Ephesus speaks to us today of that which is desirable and also permissable. All things which are desirable and permissable are not necessarily in the best interest (ICor.6:12). In business, it might be quite within the law and seem at the moment desirable to take an opportune but undue advantage, but the fact of it being lawful would not make the action ideal in the sight of God. Husband and wife might find it lawful, desirable and permissable to live a life of license, yet that is not the ideal in the sight of our perfect Savior. In these letters, Jesus Christ is speaking primarily to those who will hear His Word and who will in real hearing align themselves with its truth. He speaks of overcoming in absolute conquering the 'desirable' illusions of the sense. To the beginning overcomer, the one who conquers, He will give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. Unless there is a repentance for having left the first love and the yielding to the desirable, relegating God to second place, the light of understanding is removed. How far these desires rule in the lives of modern Christendom! The beginning overcomer will eat of Christ's own life and righteousness imparted to those who receive Him in faith. Those yielded to Christ in love and obedience will experience joys and blessedness that the fruits of righteousness and fruits of the Spirit's working in their inner being have brought forth in profusion. The "garden" of the overcomer's human body becomes the paradise (ICor.3:9) where divine Life is at work (IPet.1:23), watered by the Word (Eph.5:26) and the Spirit, and quickened by the warmth of reciprocating love (John 14:21). The Christian who dies a drunkard has not overcome his desire for that which is lawful and, therefore, does not enter into the first covenant.

2. Other Christians harbor hatred within their hearts and they have become embittered, which is the implication we receive from the title 'Smyrna'. This embittered hatred then precludes them from entering into that Life which cannot in any way be exposed to a second death. Unless you forgive your enemies, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses. Unforgiven sin precludes that Life; hatred and the Kingdom life have nothing in common. Those Christians who progress beyond the overcoming of carnal desires and into the next stage of overcoming are promised a crown of life. Those who progress beyond

the initial believing in Christ's vicarious atonement for their sins, who remain constant in the faith they have received, and who have stood up to the tests of trial and temptation are to receive an authoritative life which the second death cannot touch (Jas.1:12, John 10:28). The crown of life promised is life on a plane of higher attainment, a life in immortality either before or after a first death of the physical body. Though it is not a promise of a glorified life such as Jesus Himself has now, it is undying life on the earth planet which will permit the overcomer to advance to the next steps in overcoming as rapidly as he is able and willing. Escape from the second death is possible only by being "born anew" of the incorruptible seed (Ro.6:21-23, 10:9-10, IPet.1:23). When Jesus' own life is imparted to the soul, it is forever free from death and the eventual restoration of the physical body is also assured, if it has been laid down in death. When the "lake of fire" is activated, resulting in the second death for both body and soul, these overcomers shall have no part in it (Rev.20:12-15, Matt.10:28).

3. Yet other Christians who may be born rich or perhaps beautiful are enfolded in pride and vanity. These are the Pergamos Christian type. Pergamum means the heights, and the Church entered this era when it became 'married' to the Roman State and attained the heights brought about by that union. Unless this pride and vanity is absolutely conquered, the Lord proclaims, that one shall not be given the hidden manna to eat. To the overcomers hungry for more there is a promise bringing the Spirit of revelation (hidden manna) with truths of the living Word on a new level. At this level, the courtship is also started to win His Bride to stand beside Him (beginning at Holy Spirit baptism). A prize (white stone) is promised to the one who has run the course victoriously, that of being clothed in white with a new nature (Rev.3:4-5, 18, 7:9, 19:7-8, 14). The whiteness of the stone indicates the purity of life (imparted by Christ) which marks those who will enter the realm where they will see Him and be in constant fellowship with Him. The new name on the stone is symbolic of the new realm of glory which will be inherited by those who attain to the prize of the high calling (Phil.3:14-15).

Few, very few of those of the traditional Church persuasions will accept these truths stated by Christ. It is because Christendom, as yet, has not arrived at an understanding of the scope of 'salvation'. Not yet will Christendom believe the Word of Jesus Christ that the good seed brings forth 30-fold, and some 60-fold and some 100-fold. A careless and self-indulgent Christendom will not yet spend the time and effort to study for the truth-content of the Word, but listens only to what another irresponsible 'child' insists is or might be the Word of God, and is deprived of know-

ledge and cheated out of the rewards of blessing. 'Salvation' is not the prize of the heavenly calling. Salvation is exclusively the lifting of the death sentence. The man who sins shall die a death in both physical body and soul garment. The 30-fold have not progressed to the attainment of eternal life, but will be given a chance to do so during the Kingdom era opening after the Millenium. The 60-fold shall also have their lot here on earth, not in heaven, participating in the earth-based Kingdom. Only the 100-fold will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and thus ever be with Him - which alone speaks of the Kingdom of the heavens.

The mental acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God, together with its corollary code of ethics, constitutes a person a 30-fold Christian. Today most of Christendom is 30-fold. That one is hemmed in by the 'law' of his code of ethics. Like Israel in Egypt, he must dwell within the blood-sealed house 'until the morning', lest he be cut down by the death-angel. He has no Life, but only the promise to be given a chance to go 3 'days' journey into the wilderness to worship God. During and because of that testing, some will enter into the 'rest' of the Lord while others fail. Those who do hear His Word, transferring it from the head into the heart (soul), by faith (strong belief) receive the 'incorruptible Seed' and enter Life (IPet.1:23, Ro.6:23). They have passed from death into Life (John 5:24). They then are in the 60-fold and shall enjoy their blessed lot here on earth within the Kingdom boundaries. Beyond this step, those who are ambitious to absolutely conquer, yearning to become like their precious Lord and Savior so that their life will demonstrate a reflection of His glory, are the ones moving toward the 100-fold. The 100-fold is reached through utter consecration to the Lord's ways and purposes. When that dedication is truly in place, God places His seal upon that one which is evidenced by the Holy Spirit baptism with fire.

Attending Church and going to Bible class is proper and helpful. Being honest is your duty and doing the best you can is commendable, yet none of these constitutes 'overcoming'. But when the liar lives truth and the thief lives honesty and the whoremonger lives virtue, then there are specific cases of overcoming. It is to the overcomers that the glorious covenants are spoken and offered.

4. To the overcomer who goes on in eagerness to live by the every Word of God, meaning the wholeness of that Word, there are further promises. Thyatira means many sacrifices. This is the overcomer who absolutely conquers the soulish

pressures of the religious and political systems of the world to tolerate the 'woman Jezebel' and her leading into spiritual adultery and who has determined not to sacrifice himself into compromise for the sake of being acceptable in the eyes of man. These are the overcomers who have searched out the purity of the faith as it has been presented by Yahweh-Jesus in both the Old and the New Testament and have kept it pure, in spite of the continued tampering by the 'woman Jezebel' (Lk.18:8). The Lord searches the mind and the heart (soul) first and then evaluates the response to the purity of the Word before distributing His rewards.

To the overcomer, who goes on and keeps His commands and does His works to the end and who refuses to tolerate compromise of the truth in any form, is promised a position in the heavenly government. It is for rule in authority with power, but with no compromise. These that then have been translated into glorified bodies will be able to appear and disappear on earth. They will speak God's Word and enforce His judgments with the Father's authority. They will shepherd the nations which will follow, but will implement the Lord's will among the rebellious nations as with a rod of inflexible iron. These will also be given the 'Morning Star' and be a bright light in a world that is just about to break out of the darkness. Theirs will be a ministry of preparation for the coming of the brilliant light of understanding and righteousness which will become prevalent during the next Age and beyond.

5. Sardis refers to the remnant which escapes from the bondage of today's ecclesiastical systems and their linkages with the political and economic systems. But after the taste of freedom, it is a common weakness to coast on the attainments realized. There is the tendency for many to become 'parking lot' Christians, either in the parking lot of initial salvation or of the charismatics. In those lots are also the backsliders, and the risk in backsliding is the loss of the standing brought through Holy Spirit Baptism, once it has been attained. If lost, that one is limited to mortality on earth and the record in the Book of Life has to be altered. To the overcomer who maintains his eagerness to progress is the promise of white garments (purity in both soul and body) on earth. And at this point of overcoming on earth, there will be no subsequent backsliding and danger of loss of the 100-fold status. This overcomer is promised a higher position in government than the overcomer of compromise. He will walk with the Lord Jesus in white and be recommended to

His Father.

All who progress through this level of overcoming will walk with the Lord Jesus in white, including those who attain to an even higher level of overcoming. When He comes as a thief in the night for His special treasure, the Jewels who are the 144,000 company, will have come through this level of overcoming and then gone beyond. They shall walk with Him in white. Later those who had not gone beyond and yet have come to qualify for the fifth covenant will receive their glorified bodies and they too shall walk with Him in white. The later ones will not be of the Bride company which preceded them, but they shall walk with Him in white and occupy high position in His government organization.

6. The Church of Philadelphia today is of those who have a love for the rest of the family of the loving heavenly Father. This love has to do with making the gospel of the New Covenant available to the other children so that they too can take advantage of its benefits into maturity. But only those portions of the New Covenant can be clearly presented which are clearly understood by the one presenting. Therefore, those presenting must exercise exceeding care and be attentive, watchful, and alert so as not to be seduced by part-truth and led away and lose the crown of authority with power (Matt.24:24). But here is the weakness of the Philadelphia Church of today. Jesus spoke of this when He questioned whether He would be able to find the faith He presented anywhere on earth at the conclusion of the age (Lk.18:8). To the overcomer of carelessness and spiritual slumber is the promise of being permanently placed as a pillar in the Sanctuary of the Father of our Lord, the High Father. That overcomer will have been tested and proven and accepted and endorsed by the High Father for an <u>exalted</u> position in the New Jerusalem and in governmental responsibility.

Here again, it is <u>all</u> who have come to and gone through this stage of overcoming that shall inherit the promises attached to the respective level of the overcoming. All who endure in loyalty, with patience and expectation, will be kept safe from the perils of the Great Tribulation. Those who go only this far in their overcoming will be kept safe while going through those 3-1/2 years. Those who quickly continue into and through the next level of overcoming will be taken out of the world scene before the Tribulation begins and escape the perils. It is the 144,000 first-fruits group which will be physically removed by translation into glorified bodies before the hour of trial starts (Lk. 21:36, Rev.14:4-7). Subsequently, those who faithfully keep God's Word and put complete trust in Christ during the Great Tribulation on earth will receive full protection and guidance all through that 3-1/2

years. All who hunger for complete overcoming and the fulness of the rewards offered are promised a spiritual-power ministry on earth by the sealing with the name of Christ while still on earth, and, in glorified bodies, the sealing with the name of 'My God', which is an acceptance by the High Father, then the sealing or endorsement of the attributes necessary to reside in the New Jerusalem and also the sealing with the power-potential to reign and rule with Jesus Christ (by the sealing with My own new name). Each of these sealings brings a new level of authority and power, - and also responsibility with divine support.

7. The Laodicean Church of today is of those who present themselves as the righteous or just people. They present a front of self-righteousness for show among men. They stand for a high code of ethics and erect a high standard of justice. Yet they are eager to take maximum advantage in every situation where it is presented, even undue advantage, as long as they think they can get away with it. This is modern Christendom. It has reverted to the same weakness as in the Church of Ephesus, only on a higher 'octave' - the satisfaction of desire as long as it can be made to appear lawful. We verbally support the laws we have established to mete out justice. We proclaim that honesty is the best policy. Yet within so many is that rapacious waiting for the opportunity to 'take' another person. It is of us that the Lord speaks as being luke-warm toward Him. We too have left the first love. Our spiritual apathy in luke-warmness, He detests. Our outward display of honesty, He abhors. Therefore, it is this generation which will be spewed out of His mouth into the Great Tribulation!

All who are now alive are under that drawing into being luke-warm towards God, but there will be some who will overcome and qualify for the consummating promise of the series. If you will recognize the delusions of your indulgent doctrines, and if in contrition of heart you seek the Lord for white raiment to hide your nakedness, and if you will recognize that He requires a fervently honest motivation and an absolute conquering of the besetting failings of your generation, then He will invite you and permit you to sit on His throne with Him. If you will abide totally in Him and permit Him to do the same with you, there will be close communion and the eating of the same food. To those who so make themselves ready in time, is the promise of sitting on His throne with Him, a most exalted position in the Kingdom as the Bride of Christ. Those in governmental position appear before the throne

of the Lord (Rev.7:9). Only those of the Bride company appear with Him on His throne (Rev.14:1).

Each of the promises is associated with a command from the Lord to those who hear. "Let him hear and obey what the Spirit says to the Churches". The Greek word for 'hear' also means 'obey'. Those who obey the Lord qualify for possession of the promises; those who overlook obedience do not qualify.

Prophecy in Scripture has much to say about judgment that comes as a result of taking excursions off the path which the Lord has put before His people. This warning is seen all through the Old Testament and also in the New Testament. The pictures of judgment are shown, for example, in Isaiah and in Jeremiah as applying in the Old Testament years and also in the New Testament years which extend to our times and the end of the Age, but the pictures are shown for particular application to these end times of the Book of 'Revelation' and of the parallel passages of the other New Testament Books. Even among those who are trusting and relying on the Lord, it is so easy to find one's attention focussed on these judgments, even in some cases to the exclusion of the many attractive promises and great rewards which God has showered on His people through Jesus Christ. Such concentration of attention is an expected human response to a premonition of judgment, but it is wrong in His followers and is not the Lord's intention for us who do follow Him (IJohn 4:18, IThess. 4:3-6). We know it is wrong because the Scripture is full of the favor, generosity, empowerment and protection which God has ready for those who will follow Him wherever He leads and who will be willing to trust Him in everything. These favors and gifts and rewards are offered not because any Christian has himself earned them through his own efforts and inherent abilities, but only because he is willing to enter into God's plan for him and to let God work out the experience of having and using them as the person trustingly follows His leading. We will not be judged for sins because He has taken the sins of the world upon Himself (John 1:29), we will be evaluated for what we have done in union with Jesus, by how much we have eagerly taken of all He offers and by how willingly we have applied what He offers for maturing His Body on earth.

The voice of the Lord is calling to all men in this day. He is coming to His people in this day in a way that has not been known before, and He is preparing those who will listen to His Word and obey, for the great day that is at hand. However, there are many who will not hear His voice and neither will they respond to that which the Lord is making known. Why will people not listen and let Him prepare them for that which is just ahead? Why will they turn more and more to their own ways? What has the Lord done that His people should not want to know Him and follow in His ways? Has He not done everything in His power to make people realize His great

love for them? Has He not showered His blessings upon those He loves, and has He not been very patient and merciful? In truth, we are now witnessing the extremity to which His patience and mercy can go without intervention and judgment. We are witnessing the full measure of this age of grace, during which His grace is being extended to the limit. The day is even now pressing in on the world when judgment shall intervene, because His people have not been moved by His mercy and grace towards them, but have hardened their hearts to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, for those who will truly seek the Lord in this time of human degeneracy, He will prepare a banquet heaped with wonderful things. He will cause them to enter into that which has been prepared and they shall be abundantly blessed by the riches of His grace extended to them. That which has been shunned by the many shall be poured out upon the few who seek the Lord, and they shall have abundance, but from those who seek Him not, even that which they have shall be taken.

The Lord proclaims that He is ready to do a work that you would not believe if it were told you. He is ready to do a mighty work through a prepared people. He is ready to bring this age of grace to a climactic close by pouring out His love and blessings and power upon those who are to be the supreme exhibits of His gracious mercy - those upon whom He is going to dote in this end-time so that all men may know that truly His abundance in grace and kindness is upon those who will turn from their own ways and seek Him. All the world will see at this time of consummation that Jesus Christ is a God that keeps His Word and fulfills all that He had declared. If you will seek Him with <u>all</u> your heart, He will truly make Himself known to you and will bring you into those realms which have been reserved for this day. Much, very much, had been reserved for this day and is being prepared for those who are to manifest the consummation of the Lord's purpose for this time and this Age. So awaken, and get in on the great and glorious day which is just ahead. He will make the way plain for you, if you will heed His voice.

Awake and arise and be not content to dwell in the dust of your carnal ways. Shake loose from that which has held you captive (Isa.52:1-3). Arise and see that inheritance prepared for you, because the Lord is causing His people to see that which is their inheritance, and He is causing them to arise and enter in. His people have been bound by the traditions of men long enough. They have been held captive long enough. Our God is causing men to shake themselves loose and to arise to their heritage in Christ, and His righteousness and His salvation are being prepared before Him, He is readying a people to enter fully into His righteous ways and His salvation shall up-

hold them and provide that which they need (Matt.6:33). Truly a people are now beginning to arise and leave behind that which had bound them, and are making their way into that which is His truth and His righteousness.

So arise, for the day of your deliverance is at hand. Truly a people shall return to Zion (meaning a monumental pillar, a waymark) and rebuild the waste places and the former desolations, and they shall be called the repairers of the breach (Isa.58:10-14). In this day a remnant is returning to the ways of their God, and it shall magnify the Lord in all that is done. Therefore, the Lord calls you to hear His speaking and let Him show by the revealing of His Spirit that which He purposes in this day. Begin to realize that which is your right and your inheritance in Christ. Realize and know that Christians are living far below their covenant rights. They have barely begun to enter into that which was made available by the sacrifice of Christ when He once for all confirmed the covenant of eternal redemption. Will you not let Him open your eyes to behold what is yours? Look, I say, unto Him and behold that which He is making known to those who will listen to and obey His Word.

Awake and let the Lord show you the mighty strength of your God, and behold the mighty arm of the Lord. Even now is He ready to move in the behalf of those who will awaken out of their lethargy and call upon Him. Arise and possess your heritage. Why will you remain in the bondage of your former traditions? Why will you not shake loose and forget that which has blinded you and held you, and enter into the revelation which the Lord is making known in this hour (Eph.5:14, Isa.51:1, 9-11, 52:1-2, 11-12, Jer.50:4-9, Rev.18:2-5)?

Early in His ministry of power with authority, Jesus set forth the pattern of earthly living for those who would choose to follow Him and inherit all that now has been made ready in the Kingdom of heaven. Included in His Sermon on the Mount is the admonition that each person first seek out two things for himself. One of these is the rule of Jesus Christ over all the facets of his life. The other is the practice of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the practice of conforming to God's will in thought, attitude, purpose and action. Jesus also said that after these two things were put into practice, the other things which are needful to qualify for the full inheritance would be added (Matt.6:33). Do read the Sermon on the Mount again, with a personal application in mind.

When the person of Jesus Christ is sought out and sincerely invited to take over the government of all aspects of one's life, with the intent of fully permitting Him to rule in each and every thing which subsequently comes, a heart-union with Jesus Christ is formed (Ro. 10:9-10) and a re-birth, or a regeneration, takes place. This

also may be viewed as a new conception through the planting or impregnating with the immortal seed of Jesus Christ (IPet.1:23). By this impregnation, a new life is initiated (Ro.6:22-23). Once planted, the immortal seed is intended to grow. As with a seed planted in the garden, the immortal seed will grow, providing it is kept in fertile soil and receives regular watering, light and warmth (ICor.3:9). The fertile soil is provided by taking everything God offers, because He offers nothing that we don't need for growth in His pattern. The regular watering is applied by the continuous use of the Word and by the accompanying flow of living water from the Holy Spirit (Eph.5:26, John 7:38-39). The light and warmth are initiated by the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and are generated by reflecting His light and love back to the Jesus Christ in other brothers and sisters (IJohn 1:5, 2:10, 3:14). If one element even is lacking or missing, the growth of the immortal seed within is inhibited or stopped. The seed never dies, but its growth rate will be according to its environment.

It would be difficult to find a portion of Scripture which does not have to do with growth and development within the plan of God, but let us again review what John was given to write on this subject in his letters. John writes of the factors which apply to spiritual offspring as they grow into little children, then into adolescence, and on into an adult relationship with Jesus Christ.

Please read I John 1. Initially, there is to be the partaking of the Word (IJohn 1:1-6) and that Word is Jesus Christ Himself (John 1:1) and He is the Life and the Light. The partaking begins with the implanting of the immortal seed through the forming of a heart union with Jesus Christ as exclusive ruler (Ro.10:9-10, IPet.1:23), and the partaking continues during the growing of that seed. The growing is enabled by a cleansing from sin and guilt in all its forms, effected by application of the purchase made by Jesus Christ when He paid out His life-blood. No man is without the need of this application, because each man has fallen short of Christ's righteousness, which is conformity to God's will in thought, attitude, purpose and action (IJohn 1:7-10). In our lives, each of us has known rebellion against His will, but by His provision we are or can be cleansed of the effects of the rebellions. In addition, by His provision, none of us need to experience further compulsion from either internal or external forces to continue in rebellion. We do not need to, if we take up His provision in the way He designed it to be taken and if we use His provision in the way He designed it to be used.

Now please read I John 2. Speaking to the <u>little</u> children, to those who have <u>just</u> begun a life of volitional activity in the Lord's plan, John announces the purpose for writing the thoughts given to him. To <u>be-</u>

ginners, he writes these things so that you may not perpetuate your rebellious living in any of its forms, that you may no longer violate any of the suggestions, instructions and commandments of the One who has become your personal Ruler. In short, you don't have to sin any more, if you follow the pattern Jesus Christ prearranged; you may sin if you choose to or allow yourself to do so, but you no longer are compelled to do so, if you understand how to escape and remain free. However, if we permit ourselves to rebel, we still have an Advocate and One who is the propitiation for the sins of all who will accept Him and His enabling (IJohn 2:1-2).

Every kind of seed grows into what it is and only what it is; wheat grain grows to become wheat grass and apple seeds grow to become apple trees. Likewise, the immortal seed grows to become Jesus Christ within each person having the planting. Therefore, the maturing process involves a progressive coming to know Him as He grows within and becoming better acquainted with Him and His activity. As that immortal seed is permitted and encouraged to grow, there is also a more and more clear recognition of Him and understanding of His ways. We come to know Him through the process of cooperating with His will. We come to know Him through conforming our thoughts, attitudes, purposes and actions to His will. We come to know Him by not sinning any more, by not sinning at all. We come to know Him by walking and conducting ourselves in the same way in which Jesus walked and conducted Himself (IJohn 2:3-6). By so conducting ourselves, we can be sure of and can recognize our being fully in Him, and, as a personal debt to Him for His purchase of redemption, we owe Him that walk. As we abide in Him, so He abides in us (John 15:4).

First, there needs to be the rule of Christ in your life and also your conformance to His will, before the other needful things can be added (Matt.6:33). Do you now have a question? How does a man come to a life of not sinning? How can a man come to know Jesus? How can a man be fully in Him? How can a man be enabled to conduct himself as Jesus Christ conducted Himself? The answer to the questions, for there is really one answer to all of them, is given in many portions of Scripture, but it has been difficult for man to arrive at the answer by use of his reasoning powers. What man is able to see around him on every side in the material world tends to convince him that there is no answer to the question, at least on earth, but the Word of God instructs otherwise.

In all of Scripture, the seemingly impossible things were accomplished through naturally limited men by a supernatural anointing. Nothing of lasting value occurred, except as a result of an anointing. In the Scriptures, the anointing was often accompanied by the application of oil, because oil is the symbol of the Holy Spirit's work of impartation for effecting the 'impossible'. Therefore, it would be surprising if John was not also inspired to write here of the design and method by which man can come into a life of not sinning,

come to know Jesus intimately, become fully in Him, and be enabled to conduct himself as Jesus did.

Through perhaps 200 AD, it was typical of the early Church that a person receive instruction in two 'anointings'. These two corresponded to the double anointings of kings and priests in the Old Testament types. The first of the 'anointings' came at the forming of a heart-union with Jesus Christ as Lord, when His glorified seed was implanted. This is the gift of or from the Holy Spirit, transmitted by him into the believer following true repentance (John 16:14, 20:22, Acts 2:38). The second anointing was to come a few days later, after a period of testing and proving in dedication to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The second anointing is described as baptism or immersion in the Holy Spirit, with the fire of the Spirit being introduced for consuming all alien desires resident within the soul structure. Besides being instructed in the fact of two anointings, a person in those early years also received instruction in how to receive them and how to subsequently apply them in daily living experience. Although this typical practice quickly fell into disuse as man more and more took over the administration of the Church Body from the Holy Spirit, the practice in some measure is beginning to be restored in many contemporary small groups and in some Church assemblies.

Paul wrote of the first anointing in Ro.6 to those who have become one with Christ, or in unity with Him, through having joined themselves to Him in heart-union and He joined to them through the implantation of His incorruptible seed. Then is the moment of a re-generation, or 're-birth', in Christ (Ro. 6:5-6). Those forming a heart union with Him, in real effect, resign from the rule of the world system under Satan and die to it through the representative death of Christ for them. He paid for their release, so that system can no longer hold them, once they resign. As a result, they can and should account themselves dead to sin, behave in the newness of His life, and refuse to sin (Ro.6: 11, 4, 12). But so few know that they can, and even fewer will be that diligent to overcome old desires.

The second anointing was described as the event of the consuming of that human desire nature which could bear no good fruit (Matt.3:10-12, 7:18-19). Paul wrote that this is like a circumcision cutting off the 'flesh' of human nature in a moment of time, circumcision being a symbol of righteousness (Col.2:11-12, Ro.4:11). But again, people today do not understand the Lord's work, neither what to expect and implement. And, according to their faith, they do not know the experience of that burning away of every temptation desire in their souls.

The primary effect of the first anointing is a release from the compulsion to sin, and an impelling into righteousness, because of the glorified seed then in the heart. The primary effect of the second anointing is the burning out of every alien desire in the heart to release

that person from the temptation to sin, because he has exhibited his determination not to do so in the previous anointing.

John wrote to encourage a typical Church Body, containing 30, 60 and 100-fold Christians, to be done with sin and be obedient to the truth as it is revealed to them individually. He reminds them of the Lord's anointing and urges they make themselves ready to stand before the Lord at His coming. Once the anointing and the understanding of the proper application of its potential enabling has been received, a full abiding in Jesus Christ may then begin (IJohn 2:27-28). There is an adequate reservoir of enabling for a quick transformation, when there is also a sufficient desire and determination to see it done. Again, what is that full abiding in Him? We can know and recognize we are fully in Him by the obeying of His Word in its entirety, demonstrating the mature love of and for God. The abiding fully in Him is demonstrated by walking as Jesus Christ walked (IJohn 2:5-6). After receiving the anointing, His righteousness (conformity to His will in thought, attitude, purpose and action) can then, if earnestly desired, be demonstrated continuously (Gal.5:16), and it becomes openly evident who is born of God (IJohn 2:29).

But man has always been led to take portions of Scripture and separate them from the whole of Scripture, in order to picture a plan for man which is not God's intent. Because man teaches others that man cannot escape from sin while on this planet, it is necessary to present and again present the fact that not only has God provided a very workable and practical way to escape from the compulsion and dominion of sin while on this planet and while in the natural-born physical body, but it is also His requirement that each man overcome and eliminate rebellion in all its forms, before moving into the next stage of growth (Matt. 5:8, Rev.22:14). In any man's life, it very quickly becomes evident that such a requirement cannot be met without both possessing the anointings and properly using what it provided. We are to become conformed to God's will, fully abiding in Him, before His second coming so we may have assurance and not be ashamed and shrink from Him at His coming (IJohn 2:28). We are to resemble Him before seeing Him. Each one who has this hope in His enabling purifies himself to be pure just as Christ is pure, not committing sin anymore (IJohn 3:2-4). Purification of one's self is through obedience to the Truth, Jesus Christ (IPet.1:22). No one who abides in Him continues to or habitually sins, but he who practices righteousness is to be righteous even as Christ is righteous. There are no shadings or graduations in the required righteousness. The commission of sin is from the devil, and the reason for Jesus Christ being glorified in His resurrection body, as the Son of God, was to undo and dissolve the works of the devil, all of them, through what would then become available to the Body of Christ (John 7:38-39 ,

IJohn 3:6-8). All who fully abide in Jesus Christ obey Him, follow His plan, and live His life which is within (IJohn 3:24). His charge to love one another is also fulfilled by living, walking in accordance with, and being guided by His commandments (2John 6). Each person must ingest, digest and live the Word of God, or the full abiding is not possible. Without willingness and eagerness to receive all that He offers and without willingness and eagerness to utilize and 'live' what has been received, the full abiding is not possible.

Now, there is one more major question. Is this environment which is conducive to rapid growth, is this learning to fully abide in Him, to be derived and practiced privately? In God's plan, this is not possible, nor is it possible in any plan concocted by someone else. We are complementary members of the Body of Christ, of which He is the Head, designed and enabled to support, aid, and strengthen other members of that Body (ICor.12:11-14, 25-27, Ro.12:1-8). God has not chosen to again demonstrate His glory and wisdom through one individual, but through a corporate Body of dedicated individuals who have cooperatively permitted Jesus Christ to make them like Himself (Eph.3:10-11, 4:12-16). A matured Head on an infantile Body is not a completion of His plan; therefore, a conforming to His will includes growth <u>during</u> an obedient response in doing the work of building the Body (Ro. 12:9-13, Heb.10:24-25). The work of ministering toward building up Christ's Body to the standard of measurement which is Christ's own fulness and completeness is to be accomplished between individuals with zeal, aglow with the Holy Spirit. Each member in the Body, if he wants to experience rapid growth, is to meet frequently with others and is to watch and study out how to stimulate those others to love and helpful activity, warning, urging, and encouraging others, and all the more faithfully as the day of Christ's coming approaches.

The effective building of the Body of Christ is never by the application of any man's best thought and ability, or his guesses. The building of the Body is exclusively by the work of the Holy Spirit as he moves through the cooperating minds and muscles of men who make themselves available to Jesus Christ. It is the Lord who builds the Church (Acts 2:46-47). Unless the Lord builds the house, the labor is in vain (Ps.127:1), and He has chosen to do His work through the many members of the Body, not one or two.

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would do many things for the individual, as a result of the anointings (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:8-14). These begin with the first anointing and intensify with the second into purity (Matt.5:8). The work is planned so the individual could be a witness or manifestation of Jesus Himself (Acts 1:8). The

Holy Spirit's stewardship includes teaching all things, as Jesus did, bringing to recall the teachings, testifying of Jesus, convicting and convincing the world of the accuracy of the teachings, guiding into all Truth which is given by the Father, declaring things to come in revelation of Christ's plan, and honoring and glorifying Jesus by taking what is His and transmitting it to man. Are these works just to you for your benefit, or are they to be <u>through</u> you for benefiting the Body of Christ? The fruits of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-25), are they just to you, or are they to be evidenced through you for benefiting the Body of Christ? The gifts of the Holy Spirit, given for good and profit (ICor. 12:4-11), are they merely for your private application, or are they to be used to benefit the Body of Christ? Since each dedicated follower of Christ is a single member of the Body of Christ and incomplete in himself, all these spiritual impartations must be intended to be worked through the member for the benefit of the corporate Body. Even as the nation of physical Israel was established to provide a national example of God's work (Ex.19:5), so is the Body of Christ (spiritual Israel today) to be a corporate display and a multi-membered extension of Jesus Christ (IPet.2:9). Therefore, each of the Body members is to employ his endowment from the Holy Spirit for the benefit of others and live as a faithful steward (IPet.4:9-11). As Paul did, we are to yearn to be with others so that we might impart some spiritual gift to strengthen and establish other members of the Body (Ro.1:11).

It necessarily follows then, if the Holy Spirit action is through you, it is required of you that you be among others who are to receive that action. It also means being with them under conditions which permit your offering what is given, and needed, on a regular and frequent schedule (Heb.10:24-25, Phil.2:12-15, Eph.4:21-25, 32). For some, this type of participation in building up the Body may require little change in activity, but for most it might mean a rather drastic change in habits, in living patterns, in social involvements, and in gathering to worship. The admonitions call for searching out ways of benefiting those whom we find it difficult to like, as well as those whose company we enjoy. This stewardship, to be effective, calls for a constant attitude of praise, thanksgiving, rejoicing, and listening to be open to and aware of what the Holy Spirit is doing and wanting to do. Faithful stewardship calls for willingness and eagerness in adapting other activity into a pattern useful to the Master.

The intent here in this review on spiritual growth is to build an awareness of the Lord's need to work through Christians in order to magnify or enlarge His nature and character (His 'name') on the earth and to manifest His glory to the extent

He desires. Since He cannot remain honest if He shares His glory with any man, He will not do so. Truly it is all His glory and only His glory. Therefore, He can tolerate no mixture of what is from Him and what is offered by man, and therefore man's non-conforming or sinful nature must be consumed (Matt.3:10-12), before there is room for God's nature to fill the man. Such a transformation can only be effected by the cooperative use of power received from God. Man's best efforts are fruitless or at best, worthless (Matt.7:17-27).

In order to open the way to rapid spiritual growth, there must be an increasing awareness of the need and a willingness to give Christ's imparted word of wisdom to the foolish and rebellious, His word of knowledge to the troubled, His word of prophecy to the downhearted, His word of faith to those in need of healing and to those who are doubtful. Our Lord yearns to pass through you the best gifts and He knows which is the best for those to whom you minister. Of course, first there must be a willingness to be used for benefiting the other members of the Body, and then there must be a preparation to do so by cooperating with the Lord to attain that capacity through which He can do all He wished to do. Finally, there must be the physical placement in proximity to members of Christ's Body, in an environment which permits free and open ministry at any time, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, through whomever the Lord wishes to use. Some of you participate in such an environment, some of you don't. The result of frequent gatherings of members of the Body of Christ for the express purpose of worship and service and mutual building is rapid individual growth. Without the personal qualifying and participation in the building of the Body of Christ, personal growth in spiritual attainment remains limited or stunted. Without the removal of the limitations and prohibitions of man's organization, the coming out of the Babylon (meaning confusion) of man's systems, there cannot be the maturing which our Lord now is requiring of those He will use mightily in these last days of our Age.

THE PREPARATION FOR THE GREAT DAY

- Rev.4 -

The end-time moving of the Holy Spirit and the evidences of it have begun in our day and that moving will procede with greater and greater intensity into the Great Tribulation period, according to the promises. The great outpouring (Acts 2:17-21), the fulfillment of Pentecost (feast at the time of the wheat harvest), starts at the outset of the Great Tribulation. For God's people who have fully accepted His Way, this is the beginning of the new Age of peace and righteousness, though to most it will not look like it at the time. Other Scripture speaking of the great revival: Isa.58:6-14, 30:25-33, Hosea 5:15, 6:3, 2:14-23, Dan.12:4, Joel 2:11-32,

Acts 2:15-21, John 14:12, Ro.8:19, James 5:7-8, Eph.4:12-13. God's protection for His own is shown in Ps.46, Ps.91, Isa.54, 2Sam.22, Heb.2:14-18.

In the chapters on the letters to the Churches of the world, we have seen the status of the worship in the world, and also the admonitions, warnings and promises to the various catagories of people, particularly as they apply to the end-time generation. John starts Chapter 4 with being called to the heaven in which God's throne is now situated (not paradise) to be shown things there which will develop future to 96 AD. He is then shown the status of worship there at the end of the Age period, and right away he sees there is an open door to heaven for all who will come. The time of the scene is prior to the breaking of the first Seal, prior to the blowing of the first Trumpet, prior to the taking up of the firstfruits group, and prior to the marriage of the Lamb. :3 - Around God's throne is the rainbow of covenanted mercy. :4 - the 24 elders are rulers (IPet. 5:1-2, ITim.3:1, 5), are mature but not necessarily aged. They have power and authority (having crowns and thrones), and their function is therefore governmental in heaven. They are individuals who speak (to John - Rev.5:5, 7:13) and sing (Rev.5:9). They are distinct from John, the 4 living creatures (4:9-10), the angels (5:11, 7:11), God's people (5:8), the redeemed (5:9), the firstfruits (14:1-5), and the Harvest group - either those to be resurrected (11:17-18) or still living (7:13-14). The elders correspond in number and function to that earthly group (Heb.8:5), the rulers of the Sanhedrin. The picture is that of the situation in heaven up to the time Jesus Christ takes up His sovereignty over the earth. These elders are the senior executive officers of God. Jer. 23:18, 22 and Ps.89:7 also speak of the council of the Lord (not the counselors, Ro.11:34). The office is a priestly one and they worship God as Creator (:11), as eternal sovereign (11:17) and as righteous judge (19:4). They play harps and sing (heavenly angels speak or say), they worship the Lamb and present the prayers of the saints and they also have the status of prophets (5:9-10 and 7:14-17). :5 - Out of the throne come lightening and thunder (judgments). :6 - The sea like glass or crystal is also mentioned in 15:2; it is before the throne of God, smooth and with no tossing of waves of confusion following the winds of false doctrine.

:7-8 - The description of the 4 living creatures is obviously symbolic and similar descriptions occur in Ezek.1 and 10 and in Isa.6:2. These living creatures are worshippers and in Ezekiel's vision the 4 living creatures are a type of the Body of Christ, also worshippers. To conform the Body of Christ to His design, the Lord does have a directive for His people for He is not leading us out of the confusion of man-controlled systems of limitations on God